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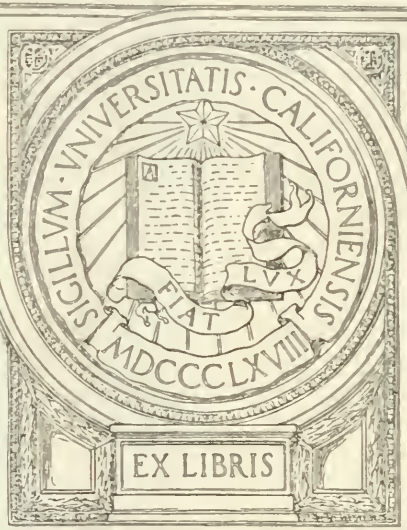

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THE WORKS

OF

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

THE WORKS

OF

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

WITH LIFE BY W. BLANCHARD JERROLD.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING

ST. GILES AND ST. JAMES, AND PUNCH'S LETTERS TO HIS SON.

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INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.

A BIOGRAPHICAL introduction to the collected writings of a working man of letters is useful, often, as explaining many of the characteristics of the author's mind, and how he reached the fields in which he fed his imagination, or built up his theories. There is pleasure in tracing the thread of his own life, that, whether thin as spider's silk, or broad and clear, the author draws through his writings. We appear to gain a personal acquaintance with the man whose pen has charmed us, or has taught us wisdom, I believe that this is the chief reason why the lives of literary men, even when most uneventful, are welcome to the public. Readers are delighted to learn how the man who, from his silent study, so long entranced them, appeared in his slippers. Did he eat, and drink, and sleep like other men? He had genius: what, then, were his eccentricities? For—authors shall spend the most humdrum lives, living on roast and boiled duly paid for; reading at the club; and keeping all the business of their days by double entry; and it shall still be some time before their readers will believe that a man may be a genius, and have no more eccentricity than a city banker. There are crowds of people who hold that a great scientific thinker must, of necessity, use a lady's finger as a tobacco-stopper. I remember sitting, at a continental table d'hôte, near an enthusiastic family, who were thrown into a

condition of dangerous mental excitement, by the arrival of a quiet, gentlemanly man; who took his seat at the lower end of the table, and talked easily and cheerfully to his neighbours. They had discovered that he was the great Mr. Blank, whose last novel they had been reading. Every ear was stretched to catch Mr. Blank's lightest word. But Mr. Blank, having arrived with a good appetite, confined his conversation to the merits of the dinner, with a passing allusion to the probable state of the weather; and, his dinner over, lighted a cigar in the court-yard, and walked smartly away—to the port.

"Who would have thought that was the great Mr. Blank?" cried the enthusiastic family. "Why, he might have been Mr. Brown or Jones!"

The difficulty is to persuade enthusiastic readers, that most modern men of letters have the appearance and manners of ordinary English gentlemen; and never go to balls or routs in shooting jackets, nor wear their hair curled to the waist.

A traveller early on his way to Richmond, passing over the then picturesque heath of Putney, some ten years ago, in the summer time; would probably see, by the gipsies' tent, a short gentleman, with wild iron-grey hair peeping from under his straw hat; a sharp, bright eye; and a lip with mocking corners to it; chattering with the gipsies, who would lie upon the grass, shielding their eyes from the sun, with their chestnut hands; and laugh at their neighbour from the snug Lodge yonder, curtained in lime-trees, and musical with a little farm-yard at the back. I am sure the stranger would hardly have paused to listen to the *badinage*, nor to mark a point of eccentricity in the owner of the Lodge. I am quite certain the gipsies themselves, who were old friends and neighbours of Douglas Jerrold, never saw anything more in him than a lively gentleman, who was very fond of early morning on the heath; who appeared to love the yellow furze very much, and pick it very often, and hold it apparently with great pleasure between his lips, while, bending

himself back, a little painfully, leaning on his stick, he watched the sky-promises of the opening day.

A man of the simplest habits; with the nature of childhood as fresh in him in his fiftieth year as when he first looked over the broad sea from a Sheerness garret, and saw the great war-ships dip under the horizon—going, he longed to know whither. My father, the subject of this memoir, would have been remarked anywhere, not for an eccentricity, but for a simple freshness of manner; the manner of a country gentleman brightened by the sea. All his life the boy shone through the man. The laugh remained clear and loud; the spirit free and adventurous; the mind as bent upon the realisation of shining dreams, as in the days when two boys, unknown to fame, stood out of the rain under a London doorway, dreaming of the gallant things they would do, under Lord Byron, in behalf of the Greeks. Since these young soldiers of Independence, who were to have become volunteers Douglas William Jerrold and Samuel Laman Blanchard, dreamed that glorious dream in the rain and fog of London; the lives of both have been fought in the fields of literature, far away from Greece!

The time and atmosphere in which my father was born and spent his youth, were calculated to give him that free, gallant, and cheerful spirit which appeared, in after life, too strong and impetuous for the slight, weak frame in which it was housed. He was born in London, on the 3rd of January, 1803; but his first recollections were of Sheerness, where his father owned and managed a theatre. In those days, war made Sheerness a lively place to live in. To a boy of quick imagination, the tramp of the gallant old salts through the streets, the brave Lord Cochrane among them, and their rough stories of their exploits; with the ships roaring their salutes, and the press-gangs kidnapping more food for powder; life in the old sea-port must have had endless attractions. Then there was his father's theatre, with its scenic wonders, amid which my father actually appeared more than once, carried on by Edmund Kean, in Rolla,

Being early a greedy reader, his mind strengthened soon, fed from within and without. His Christmas piece and the book his baby-hands held, and over the pages of which his great blue eyes wandered; are treasures we, who belonged to him, reverently keep, to remind us of the mere flash of childhood he enjoyed.

In December, 1813, a slight, frail child was carried on board the Namur guard-ship at the Nore, to become a midshipman in the service of the king! A boy for the captain's lady to pet, not for the hoarse throat of Mars to thunder at! But these children in uniform had the blood of the gentle and brave in them; and it was a good sight to behold how proudly they sported the dirk, and bore their duties, while their mothers were mournful in the empty nursery. Childhood was gone, to them. Among these my father stood, through the influence of Captain Austin, relative of the novelist, and met a brave sailor on the ship—who has since, with a master's hand, painted the sea he once sailed—Clarkson Stanfield. In those rough days of the old war, a young gentleman on board one of the king's ships, did not lie on a bed of roses. The discipline was hard, and the kicks were many. They sickened, and I have no doubt well nigh broke the hearts of crowds of delicate boys. What a story for the cock-pit must my father's grandmother have unconsciously made, when she sent to the captain, to beg that her dear young Douglas might be allowed to wear pattens on the sloppy decks! Dear Douglas must, on his side, pray to be transferred to a ship that was something more than a log anchored at the Nore. He touched his hat to the captain, and begged to be sent to glory. His petition was granted, and he went to the Ernest, gun-brig; and dipped, in his turn, under the horizon he had watched from his Sheerness nursery. Of the war he saw nought, save its last horror. The ship in which he sailed, conveyed troops to Belgium for Waterloo, and brought back a cargo of wounded. He has described the gun-brig in Jack Runnymede. This last service in which our young midshipman was engaged, was a horror that lived ever after in his mind, and

tinctured all his thoughts of war. When he met a parade of laurels, his mind flew back to the gory stumps he used to see dressed of mornings, as he sailed from the Belgian coast, with a cargo of heroes. A braver spirit never stood; and he has been heard to say, glowing with his memories of the sea, that, had he been somewhat taller and stronger, he would have been heard of from British oak; but the normal state of my father's mind was one of disgust for soldiering. Although a man of combative temperament, and quite prepared to give his sons a lesson in boxing; he could not but be won through his imagination, that loved the harmonies of nature, to the quiet and Christian glories of peace.

He brought from his ship, when he was put ashore at Sheerness after the peace, a love of the salt water and of salt water heroes, that possessed him to his death. It appeared to brace and strengthen his mind, and to intensify his wit. It gave him that strong manliness which triumphed over the feebleness and spareness of his body, and made his presence redoubtable. He flashed his sayings across the table, as from a port hole; and everybody remembered, there was a gallant little gunner in company, who had more powder and shot at hand.

He needed all the strength and courage he could bring from the sea to London, on that chill new year's day, 1816, when he landed from the Chatham boat. His father was now a man of broken fortune, from whose exertions there was little more to hope. Alone with his father, the ex-midshipman tasted what sharp food Poverty offers to the adventurers who meet her, in London. He turned to a printing office, and brought to his father the little money he could earn. They shared it in the court where they lived; and saved enough to hire volumes of Walter Scott to read. There can be no doubt in the minds of men who knew my father intimately, that his early days in London gave a bitterness to his mind, which would burst out from time to time. He abhorred tyranny; he passionately hated injustice; and his attacks were vehement when a tyrant

appeared, or an unjust thing was done. Through the younger half of his life he suffered much. He was galled by hard task-masters, and buffeted rudely by men whom he despised. When he had emancipated himself (while he was yet a boy) from the drudgery of a printing-office, to which he was not born, and for which the position of "officer and gentleman" in the king's service had not fitted him—he sought to live by his pen. Men who knew him in these his boyish days, attest how bravely he fought, with his head high, and a resolve in his heart that never forsook him. The labour he performed was so great, and was so broadly spread, that it has become impossible to trace all of it. Scraps of poetry, squibs, dramatic criticisms, and dramatic pieces of all descriptions, flowed from his pen; but brought no great supply of grist to the mill;—and grist was wanted.

In his twenty-first year, my father had married Miss Mary Ann Swann of Wetherby, in Yorkshire; and his friend Blanchard had duly congratulated him in verse. A young family was increasing his responsibilities. The grist must come therefore; and so, he struck his bargains in fetters. His pieces made successes on the boards of the minor theatres; and the scene-painters received more money than the author. He had to deal with dishonourable men, who would never give him his due. What wonder, then, if, now and then, he impaled a scoundrel on "the wasp's edge of an epigram"? His dear friend Laman Blanchard, who was the more fortunate of the two, in early times, would sing to him—

> "——The time shall be
> When men shall find a music in thy name"—

but he wanted now, what success should bring to wife and children. It was unfortunate that chance threw him in the way of bad men, who duped him when he was generous to them; and cheated him, when they professed to serve him. If I insist upon this early and comparatively obscure part of his career, it is because it explains a phase of his mind, and the

intensity of his passion when, in later days, he took up the cudgels of the poor and defenceless. Richter has said, "It is long ere the wounds inflicted by an unjust man are healed."

My father's first success, that made his name known in London, was his nautical drama entitled, "*Black-Eyed Susan:*" an inspiration brought with him, like Lieutenant Tackle, Captain Channel, and others, from the sea. In after life he was not proud of its authorship—being rich in better, that is, in higher, things. The nautical drama holds the stage, however, because it has strong human interest in it. Its pathos goes quite round the house. Its jollity tastes of the salt; and the British public relish the rough jargon from before the mast. Actor and manager made a fortune by it. Mr. T. P. Cooke was on the point of being hanged from a yard-arm, at the Surrey and Drury Lane theatres, every evening. Money was turned from the box offices: but only a few pounds from the groaning exchequer reached the author's pocket. He gained reputation, however; this no manager could take from him: and still, with unabated courage, he wrote for the minor theatres—making his way steadily, but with toil and trouble, to Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

And all this time he was educating himself. He would have his fire laid over-night, and rise by candle-light on winter's mornings, to read his Latin and French; and to make ready for his Italian master (he still lives in Boulogne to tell the story), who was to come presently. He read all the old dramatists and poets; and he was not content until he could enjoy Rabelais easily in the original. He was a diligent student of Jeremy Taylor, and an enthusiastic Shakspearian. He worshipped the genius of the Bard of Avon, and bade every young man read his Bible and his Shakspeare. Wit like his belongs to a serious mind.* Where other men saw only a black hole in the bottom

* "I am convinced that the world will get tired (at least I hope so,) of this eternal guffaw at all things. After all, life has something serious in it. It cannot be all a comic history of humanity. Some men would, I

of the well, he caught a sparkle from the water. It is the privilege of the dull to sneer at wits, as shallow, or, at least, not learned men. He never condescended to be a mere comic talker; and when he was expected to shine, was silent. He had a respect for that which was deeper in him than his wit. The poetic germ that bubbled up in him, was that which he cherished, and was at pains to cultivate through his life. He used his force as a satirist with a will, because by it he could best chastise those he deemed to be political or social wrong-doers. He had felt all the poor feel, with the acuteness of an exquisitely sensitive nature. He was a liberal by instinct, and the accidents of his life had sharpened this instinct, by proving to him that it was good. No man ever had less of the agitator in him. The coarse forms—not to say company—which were the belongings of Chartists and demagogues in his time, were detestable to him. His was a pure literary mind, that was satisfied to dwell in literature for ever; and never sought for power beyond the library.

My father had strong political feelings which came from a heart that had suffered much. He grew serious in windy weather, because he had sailed the stormy seas. All the powers he had in him were in battle array in a moment, when a great calamity had happened, or a grievous wrong had been committed. He did not coolly divide the question into three heads, and examine each: he poured out that which he deemed to be the truth in him. It would be impossible to evolve a political system from his newspaper writings: but they abound in bits of most eloquent pleading for the helpless and the oppressed The Corn-laws did not appear to him as they would appear to the editor of the "Economist." He simply called for a big

believe, write the comic Sermon on the Mount. Think of a comic History of England; the drollery of Alfred; the fun of Sir Thomas More in the Tower; the farce of his daughter begging the dead head, and clasping it in her coffin, on her bosom. Surely the world will be sick of this blasphemy."—*Letter to Charles Dickens.*

free-trade loaf for the workman's cupboard, instead of the little protection loaf, which was to keep the children hungry and rents high. In this way he was the friend of the tenant and not of the landlord, seeing that the latter was quite able to protect his rights, and was not unlikely to get a little more than his just due. Thus "The Rent Day," is as political as any of his leading articles.

And so the gallant spirit that was in the sailor-boy—that chafed at the idleness of a guard-ship—removed to London, did battle with poverty, and amended the faults of a most limited education. It would not be subdued, nor wander from its object. The spirit was pliant withal—springing up easily after a trial, and facing the world for more punishment. Gentle Laman Blanchard, in some letters I have, reproves the haste and temper with which my father was getting his 'vantage ground; and in this letter the difference in the temperaments of the two men whose mutual friendship sweetened the lives of both, is manifest. I see the two figures before me. The one with a fiery eye, a dilated nostril, a firm Napier face, with wild hair over it; the other placid, quiet, and with a beauty almost feminine. The two men must have approached each other from opposite ends of the earth: the one fiery, and resolute to conquer—the other calm, content to wait, and to do some other day, when the sun is brighter. They quarrelled, like children, about the way of the world; and they parted for a time, because they could not meet like men who have a coolness—and are still on speaking terms. The daring and impatience of the one, shook the nerves of the other. Blanchard gently sang that the day when the world would find "a music" in his friend's name, was to come; and his friend was not patient enough.

Through a series of circumstances on which it is not needful to dwell; where friends were false and the victim was too trustful; my father passed, even when his name was known, through trials, in which it was difficult not to be a little at war with the world. He afforded help to men who proved thankless and

dishonest; and years of work at his desk, paid the penalty of his indiscretion. He was generous to a fault: and gave where it was almost foolish to give. It was a hearty way with him to accede to any request made on his purse, his influence, or his time. And when he found he had been cheated of his sympathy, he was roused to fury. With all his penetration and his experience of the world, which he began to learn roughly as he stepped from his cradle, no man was more easily imposed on. When a stranger advanced into his presence, he began by believing him; and so, half the stranger's point was gained at the outset. The begging-letter impostor found an easy dupe in him. He had the revenge of painting a few of his enemies; but they were dear models. In the hard times of his life, most of his minor pieces, as *The Schoolfellows*, *Doves in a Cage*, *The Hazard of the Die*, *Nell Gwynne*, *The Housekeeper*, *the Wedding Gown*, and the one-act tragedy called *The Painter of Ghent* in which, for a few nights, he tried his fortune on the stage, these and a host of others, were produced. In these years also he wrote dramatic criticisms and leaders for the *Morning Herald*: stories and articles for the annuals; magazine papers, for *Blackwood*, &c., some of which were collected into three volumes, entitled *Men of Character*: he edited and contributed largely to *The Heads of the People*; and he made a second collection of magazine articles under the title of *Cakes and Ale*. These great literary activities gave him an acknowledged position among the known writers of the day; but still his fame might be said to rest mainly on his successful contributions to the stage. He had, indeed, founded a domestic drama, of which he said—"it is a small thing, but mine own." That impatience which, as I have remarked, always manifested itself in him, when there was a wrong to be set right; led him to take an active part in the contention against the monopoly of the patent theatres, and in behalf of the rights of dramatic authors.

It was when "Punch" was started, in the year 1841, while my father was at Boulogne, that a permanent channel, most

happily and completely adapted to his genius, was first opened to it. His wit, his passion, his quaintnesses—all the forms in which he sought to communicate himself to the world, and be understood by it at last, would here find a place. The heartiness with which he threw himself into what was almost a new life to him, was characteristic. He saw all the developments his new friend with the hunch, might take. He might be wild buffoon, or a wise fool, in his generation. "Punch" was not intended to be a merely comic periodical. "Punch" was to be a grave philosopher, a tender romancist. He should have his political strength. He should bring his wit and humour and satire, to bear upon very great shams indeed. The rapid hold which the now world-renowned and most puissant "Punch," took of the British public, fairly astonished all the heavy wiseacres who had foretold the speedy discomfiture of a mountebank. The cap and bells were fitted upon wise heads: the fooling was not purposeless, and was even learned. The hunchback had been removed from the street-corner to the drawing-room, and the library; and might be seen in the palace the Sovereign, and in the cabinet of the premier. He was a relief—a relaxation—a new stimulant to grave professors and fagged students. Just as men whose lives are spent in grave pursuits that stretch the intellect to its extremest tension, run away from the laboratory, or the study, or the studio, to some club where they will see their fellow-workers roaring like lions, and wagging their tails (being members of the British Lions)—so reverend readers and lecturers, pacing the quiet quadrangles of ancient colleges, found "Punch" a right welcome hour's laughter once a week.

From the establishment of "Punch" to within one week of his death, my father was an incessant contributor to it. Into its columns he poured an infinite variety of quaint papers, satires, stories, essays, humorous and grave, and facetiæ and mots, by the hundred. "Punch" gave his mind a holiday, where it could play freely. Here was a public channel for the

sudden thought, the spontaneous joke, and all the ideas to which the passing events gave rise, at the reading of the morning paper. He had a storehouse, where he could deposit all the lighter play of his rich fancy; and save for others, the peals of laughter that were, before Mr. Punch came into the field, reserved for his friends.

The first series of contributions in which he was of undoubted value to the rising fame of "Punch," were those which were signed "Q." These are a most fanciful, vigorous, pungent, and sarcastic set of political squibs. They stir the blood, and provoke the laugh; aye, and attune the mind to thoughts that have no laughter in them. They were written in fine Saxon English; and went home to the hearts of thousands. Some were thunderbolts which Mr. Punch sent with his compliments to enemies of the people, and purveyors of shams, and unconscionable pluralists, and to the martinets who held up the cat-o'-nine-tails as real commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's forces. Others were sharp lance-thrusts at bigots and noodles. I make no doubt, however, that many hole-and-corner politicians of the day, decided that they didn't go far enough. There are men who would look upon a leader who should head the mob into the wine cellars of Buckingham Palace, as a mere trimmer who had only made a feint in the right direction. There are extreme men tacked to all political parties: and these hate the moderate and rational men of their own party, with a deeper hatred than they bear to their political opponents. I remember a wild democrat of the famous 10th of April, who was disgusted, and declared he despaired of the Liberal party, when some rational men whom he addressed, declined to help him in getting up an organisation, the object of which was to blow up Westminster Bridge by penny subscriptions!

The opening of the Punch campaign—where Mr. Punch's political creed was explained to the British public—was hinged upon the celebrated Bed-chamber plot. My father's first contribution to the new periodical appeared on the 13th of September,

1841, and was entitled "Peel Regularly Called In." My father had been a passionate reader of natural history always (he had a copy of Buffon with him on board the Namur), and in this article, and in a hundred others, he turned this reading to witty account. Le Vaillant speaks of a turtle that continued to live after its brain was taken from its skull, and the cavity stuffed with cotton. "Is not," says "Q.," "England, with spinning-jenny Peel at the head of its affairs, in this precise predicament?" The Tories were giving themselves a new name; and "Q." writes, "When adders shall become eels, then will we believe that Conservatives cannot be Tories." The times in which these papers were begun and continued, were big with events: and great changes impended at home. It was a time when Toryism was powerful; and my father could speak in his own way, that which he knew from his heart, aye, and from his suffering. It is almost inconceivable that so shrewd a man as the late Duke of Wellington should have said, in hard times too, that every poor man, if only "sober and industrious," was "quite certain" of acquiring a competency,—a monstrous assertion to make of any country on the face of the earth. My father's pen was dipped in gall most wholesomely bitter. He declared that if this were the Duke's belief, he knew no more of England than the Icelander in his sledge. This was hard hitting; but a calumny as heartless as it was absurd had been spoken of the suffering thousands who were in the United Kingdom. "Q." concludes, in no mood to mince matters, "Gentlemen Tories, shuffle the cards as you will, the Duke of Wellington either lacks principle or brains." The reader who should be at the trouble of following these papers through "Punch," as the daily newspapers suggested subjects to "Q.," will see how closely the man and the author stood together; and how the strength was always put forth for the weak side. The picture of pure Christianity in London, for one day, is in my father's happiest manner. Dr. Chalmers would have nought to do with getting a big loaf for the poor; he was for "universal Christian education for the poor." "Q."

applied the doctor's test. Everybody has been made, or is to be made, a practising Christian. The bench of bishops meet at Lambeth Palace, and—"discovering that locusts and wild honey—the Baptist's diet—may be purchased for something less than ten thousand a-year—and after a minute investigation of the Testament, failing to discover the name of St. Peter's coach-maker, or of St. Paul's footman, his valet, or his cook, take counsel one with another, and resolve to forego at least nine-tenths of their yearly incomings." A Christian Sunday! "Had one page," "Q." writes, "ten thousand times its amplitude, it would not contain the briefest register of the changes of that day." "Q." concludes with Doctor Chalmers: "We are with Dr. Chalmers for Christianity, but not Christianity of *one side*." There are whimsical as well as solemn papers. The masons who were building the Houses of Parliament, struck during a distress. Q. suggested that the members should build their own roof, like beavers. Shall cuckoos and members of Parliament alone be lodged at others' pains? Follow some humorous suggestions. As—Sir James Graham would do the dove-tailing. Disraeli was to do the light interior work. "His logic, it is confessed, will support nothing; but we think he would be a very smart hand at a hat-peg." The article on Politics of the Outward Man—à propos of some fashionable reporter's sneers at fustian-coated men, &c., is full of indignation most forcibly expressed. Man's covering—"the livery of original sin, bought with the pilfered apples—is worn into a hole; and Opinion, that sour-breathed hag, claps her blue lips to the broken web, gives a puff, and out goes man's immortal spark! From this moment the creature is but a carcass"—that can work. Poor Sir Peter Laurie's woful mistakes and persevering blunders, did not escape the satirist. The opening fire is heavy. "Q." has no more thought of dedicating a whole page of "Punch" to one Sir Peter Laurie than the Zoological Mr. Cross would think of devoting an acre of his gardens to one ass, simply because it happened to be the largest known specimen of the species; still,

for the alderman's benefit, he paints life by Comfort and then by Penury. Sir Peter had committed a starving man to the treadmill for a month, for having attempted to put an end to his life. "Q." ends thus, on this theme: "The surest way for the rich and powerful of the world to make the poor man more careful of his life, is to render it of greater value to him." Running over the papers—and there is deep feeling and abundant wit in all of them—my eye is arrested by the name of the Marquis de Boissy—so far back as 1842—talking the nonsense of the withered brains of the Quartier St. Germains, in Louis Philippe's Chamber of Peers. Said the Marquis—"The worst enemies of government are persons without property." This speech from a cruel heart, speaking through a head where only the smallest cavity had been left for brains, was twisted scornfully, a thousand ways, by "Q.," under the head of "The Traitor 'Nothing.'" There was a prophecy in the peroration. "And, alas! we fear it is too true—Nothing is an enemy of the Government! And Nothing—let the Government be sure of it—has a hundred thousand emissaries." Nothing proved too strong for the Marquis de Boissy's then master in 1848.

When the county courts were under discussion, "Q." was, of course, on the side of cheap law. "Turkey," he said, "has her eunuchs, Russia her Cossacks, and England her attorneys." And again, of the clamour made by lawyers for dear law: "It is because lawyers are not wedded to justice that, like other profligates with their nominal wives, they would have her dress finely." I give these as instances of the kind of political writer my father was; and how he attacked with new weapons, and had tactics and ammunition all his own. The following, of direct and indirect taxation, is a good example. Mr. Charles Buller preferred indirect taxation to direct taxation. "Q." likens indirect taxation to the activity of the vampire bat—he is the indirect tax-gatherer. "For we are told that the creature, in the silence of night, fixes itself upon the toes of the sleeper, and drinks and drinks its greedy draughts of blood, and while

it drinks, benevolently fans its victim with its wings; and so the sleeper, *i. e.*, the tax-payer, sleeps on until the vampire is gorged; and then the creature goes away, leaving the man in perfect ignorance of the amount of income he has, in his slumber, subscribed. Now, this is the sort of tax-gatherer proposed by Mr. Charles Buller. Dr. Peel, however, says, 'No; I want so many ounces of blood from every man, according to his capabilities of losing the same. I will take them, weigh them fairly; so hold out your arm, and—where's the basin?'"

Enough—to give the reader an idea of the manner in which Douglas Jerrold touched political questions. He was enthusiastic on the popular side, as Shelley was. He dealt with great indisputable wrongs, and drove sharp epigrams into the vital marrow of them; or wrapped them in quaint story or happy metaphor. Of these papers of his contributed to "Punch," whether signed "Q.," or called "Punch's Letters to his Son," or "Punch's Complete Letter Writer," it may be equally said—in the words of Mr. Hannay: the paper—"stands out by itself from all the others—the sharp critical knowingness, sparkling with puns, of A'Beckett—the inimitable, wise, easy, playful, worldly, social sketch of Thackeray. In imagery he has no rivals there; for his mind had a very marked tendency to the ornamental and illustrative—even to the grotesque. In satire, again, he had fewer competitors than in humour; sarcasms lurk under his similes, like wasps in fruit or flowers. I will just quote one specimen from a casual article of his, because it happens to occur to my memory, and because it illustrates his manner. The 'Chronicle' had been attacking some artists in whom he took an interest. In replying, he set out by telling how, in some vine countries, they repress the too luxuriant growths by sending in asses to crop the shoots. Then he remarked gravely, that young artists required pruning, and added, 'How thankful we ought all to be that the "Chronicle" keeps a donkey!' In sterner moods he was grander. Of a Jew money-lender he said that 'he might die like Judas, but that he had no

bowels to gush out;' also, that 'he' (the money-lender) 'would have sold our Saviour for *more money*.' An imaginative colour distinguished his best satire, and it had the deadly and wild glitter of war rockets. This was the most original quality, too, of his satire, and just the quality which is least common in our present satirical literature. He had read the old writers—Browne, Donne, Fuller, and Cowley—and was tinged with that richer and quainter vein which so emphatically distinguishes them from the prosaic wits of our day. His weapons reminded you of Damascus rather than Birmingham."

Bushels of articles of every description were carved with this poetic weapon, during the sixteen years that intervened between the establishment of "Punch" and my father's death. In addition to the miscellaneous list—the titles of which would fill pages—he contributed to "Punch"—the tender "Story of a Feather," and "Our Honeymoon." "Mrs. Bib's Baby" and "The Female Robinson Crusoe" were soon abandoned. But "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures" sprang into a wild popularity that travelled over Europe. I have a Dutch translation of what Mr. Job Caudle suffered, in my possession. The "Story of a Feather" had a success which my father valued more than the noisy triumphs of Mrs. Caudle. Mr. Dickens wrote to congratulate him on his "wise and beautiful book." A well-known critic wrote of it: "The predominant characteristic of this story is power, and the moral character of it, earnestness; it is painted with intensity, for it has feeling in every paragraph. No 'wit' could have written it, any more than he could have written the funeral service." The same critic remarks on the manner in which my father got under weigh with a subject, and how he conducted the journey with "pomp and plentifulness."

This active work continued for "Punch" to within eight days of Douglas Jerrold's death. I suspect a fragment I have entitled "Adam's Apples," was the beginning of a new "Punch' series.

Let the reader observe what manner of worker my father was, even in the prosperous times to which "Punch" and his brilliant success on the stage introduced him. He edited successively "The Illuminated Magazine," "Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper," "Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine," and for the last five years of his life "Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper." Let the reader run down the list of his re-published dramatic works only (and they are not half he wrote for the stage), and he must be astonished to find that the writer had time to edit a newspaper and a magazine, and contribute every week to "Punch" into the bargain. In his Shilling Magazine he wrote his story of "St. Giles's and St. James's." He was attacked, hereupon, as a writer who desired at all times to rob the rich for the benefit of the poor. He appealed against this charge, which angered him always. "It has been my endeavour," he says, "to show, in the person of St. Giles, the victim of an ignorant disregard of the social claims of the poor upon the rich; of the governed million upon the governing few; to present—I am well aware how imperfectly—but with no wilful exaggeration of the portraiture—the picture of the infant pauper reared in brutish ignorance, a human waif of dirt and darkness. Since the original appearance of this story, the reality of this picture in all its vital and appalling horror, has forced itself upon the Legislature, has engaged its anxious thoughts, and will ultimately triumph in its humanising sympathies. I will only add that, upon an after revision of this story, I cannot think myself open to the charge of bedizening St. Giles at the cost of St. James; or of making Hog Lane the treasury of all the virtues, to the moral sacking of Mayfair. • • • Some of it has been called 'bitter;' indeed, 'bitter' has, I think, been a little too often the ready word when certain critics have condescended to bend their eyes upon my page; so ready that, were my ink redolent of myrrh and frankincense, I well know the sort of ready-made criticism that would cry, with a denouncing shiver, 'Aloes, aloes!'"

My father's last work of fiction was "A Man Made of Money," begun in that, to him, fruitful literary year 1851. There are sound critics who believe that it will be read longer than any of his works. It has been ranged with "Peter Schlemil" and "Zanoni;" and has been said to deserve rank with the philosophic stories so fashionable in the last century. The philosophy on the money-grubber's fate, permeates the story. In his literary estimate of my father, Mr. Hannay says, alluding to "A Man Made of Money," it "is the completest of his books as a creation, and the most characteristic in point of style—is based on a principle which predominated in his mind—is the most original in imaginativeness, and the best sustained in point and neatness, of the works he has left." Even in this the middy turns up—as it does in the last fragment he left in MS. The fragment is in "Adam's Apples:" "Adam lay beneath the oak. An acorn dropped into his hand. His world-reading eye dwelt upon the seed. He saw forests. He heard the hammers of shipwrights; and he saw the oaks, bowed into ships, take water, breasting it like swans. And then, with somewhat of the saddest look, he saw Horatio Nelson smitten on the deck."

Between 1851 and his death, my father made three more appearances on the stage, viz., with "Retired from Business," "St. Cupid; or Dorothy's Fortune," and "The Heart of Gold." In 1854 he resolved not to write again for the theatre.

I believe the happiest time of my father's life was when, feeling that he had made his ground good, he could take his occasional leisure; pass his summers in the country—and when having had successes at both the patent houses with "The Bride of Ludgate," "The Bubbles of the Day," "The Prisoner of War," &c., he brought a five-act comedy to the Haymarket in 1845. For about twelve years of his life—and these the last—he enjoyed the fruit of forty years of as hard fighting as ever man, who took up literature as a profession, could know. The long summer he spent in an ivy-covered cottage, near Herne

Bay, appeared to open a bright way into the future. He enjoyed that holiday like a boy. He was in the orchard while the dew was on the grass: he played upon the haycocks. He was known in the Bay, for his lively talk with the bathing folk. In the villages round about, he would watch the sports, and laugh as though he had just come out of school. Every minute, the beauty of the country enraptured him. He would pick a beetle from a rose bush, and laying it upon the back of his hand, would watch it for half an hour; and then put it upon the flower again. As he sat reading, or taking his claret under the trees with a friend, he would raise his face to the heavens, and draw in the pure air, and vow that the day was exquisite. He prided himself on his botanical knowledge; and went from bush to bush, and flower to flower, absolutely revelling in the nature about him. He would turn suddenly upon the nearest companion—"And this, sir, is within five hours of Fleet Street!" The thought seemed to sadden him. He had spent nearly all his life hardly clear from London smoke: but he was never of London. He hated the stony streets and noisy thoroughfares: and so, rich or poor, he generally contrived to stow his household gods somewhere where there was, as he said, "a bit of green." He once took a cottage in the Vale of Health, towards the end of one of the severest Decembers I can call to mind; and was surprised to find that the family did not entirely approve of the measure.

His Kentish walks suggested to him some of his best papers, and they were written in the ivy-covered cottage, after rambles. In this way the article on "The Reculvers," that on "The Old Man at the Gate," and "The Two Windows," were written—and printed in his Illuminated Magazine, which he was then publishing. With his pet spaniel, and his stick, he would stroll off slowly between the Kentish hedgerows—and sit, to watch the sea, from the ruined churchyard of the Reculvers. He could see the breezy entourage of his old home at Sheerness—and past these two turrets he sailed, when he brought back those maimed

men from Waterloo. Sometimes he would dip down to the valley behind, past King Ethelbert's gateway.

"The Two Windows" were seen on a summer's day. We had strolled through the lovely English village from which Herne Bay gets its name, and had gone through the churchyard to the park beyond. The rise and swell of the finely-timbered land, dotted with sheep, and white and yellow with daisies and buttercups, woke all my father's enthusiasm. He lingered, and turned about—and could not feast enough on the beauties before him. As we turned the angle of a clump of trees, a long, low white building appeared, on the brow of the hill.

"There's a lovely situation!" said my father—"What a view!"

View! There was a long blank wall—stretched to the beauties of one of the loveliest spots in lovely Kent—with two little windows, about large enough for a hen to pass through. He wondered what the strange building could be.

"The House," said a passing rustic.

It was the workhouse: and the humane authorities, had denied the poor the comfort of this view of the meadow, with Herne Church in the distance, and the blue sea beyond. My father turned abruptly back from his walk, declaring again and again, that it was the most detestable bit of wickedness he could remember. He sent me back to sketch the scene, and the lightless wall: and he wrote "The Two Windows" for the "Illuminated Magazine," while I put my sketch upon wood. I remember the fervour of the concluding lines: "If God punish man for sins, as man punishes man for poverty, woe to the sons of Adam!"

But the chief result of the summer in Kent—among the wheat and hops, and under the noble chestnuts, and amid the Saxon peasantry: the result of endless solitary rambles through sunny villages, under creaking signs where steaming horses were slaking their thirst; and past doorways where bacon could be espied smoking in the chimney corners:—of days spent with

a rich Kentish farmer hard by—who may have sat for the Hermit of Bellyfulle, and whose homestead seemed to be greasy with the plenty there and thereabouts—was the sunny book, which my father held chief among all his works, as the truest fragment of him he had managed to throw off—"The Chronicles of Clovernook."

The Chronicles are a fragment of what it was originally intended by the author they should be; but the fragment, it was his belief, had a better chance of reaching the hands of future generations, than the rest of his works. All the qualities of his genius shine their brightest here. The study of benignant nature is rich and rare. Sunday in the country is a picture of peace and beauty and simple worship, away from "the benummying wrappers of sect." The legends have "purposes" in them, from which the author, being a man in downright earnest with the world, could never long wean his fancy. The painting of "The Gratis," is in sunbeams. The Hermit is delightful in his oily and sensuous content. The scenery—the air of rich quiet—are Kentish. The reader can almost smell the dreamy perfume of distant hop-fields. No where, save in the house under the ivy, in the plenty and beauty of Kent, would the "Chronicles" have been written. Not in Boulogne, for instance, where "The Prisoner of War" and "Gertrude's Cherries" were constructed—the latter in a curious cottage (wherein poor, forgotten Mrs. Jordan died, in a sad plight), up a muddy, picturesque, precipitous lane, between high hedge-rows. It was a place only my father could have found. A rough, more than homely cottage, with a little terraced garden behind, and a colony of old French maids babbling round about. I have heard magpies on entering a Swedish village; but I would have defied them to stand five minutes against the ancient *demoiselles*—who were wont to talk over the wall—(their voices would have gone as easily through it) of my father's garden. There was not a meadow, worthy of the name, near us; but a few miles off was the Valley Du Denacre, through which I have seen many men whose

names are familiar as household words, amble upon the backs of patient donkeys, to eat omelettes and fresh salad at *Souverain Moulin*. In this retreat comedies with French or Belgian scenes, did not come amiss. Weather—surroundings—had so strong an effect on my father, that a few clouds would stop his morning's work, or put off even a long trip. He could do nothing where he was in the least ill at his ease; although years before, he had slaved at his inkstand under every discomfiture. He must take up a thing in his own way, and at his own time. Quick to take in all he saw, and to bear the effect of it, and re-produce it—on fitting occasion; he could never report his observations, nor go about for the express purpose of observing.

He went to Paris while Lamartine was paramount in 1848, intending to write a series of articles on the aspect of Paris in Revolution, and on the state of parties. He was accompanied by a secretary; Mr. George Hodder. A most important series of papers were to be produced. My father carried letters of introduction to all the most notable men in and out of the Government. He could not accomplish his mission. He could not pick up information—make notes on the spot—nor push his way with letters of introduction. So he returned to London with his introductions in his pocket—having written one letter—which he could have written without stirring from London. It was exceedingly important to the fortunes of his own paper that the projected series should have a marked success: but he could not vanquish his repugnance for the work—the fact being that he was totally unfitted for it. He was angry with himself, and could not bear an allusion to the subject. I mention this as illustrative of the way in which he observed: not by eye, and note-book, and to order, and with the deliberately proposed object of making copy of what he saw. His reply when some friend stopped him in Jermyn-street, and asked him whether he was picking up character, and he answered—"No: but I understand a great deal is lost here"—is suggestive to any man who knew him, of the impatience he

would manifest at the degradation of a faculty to a mechanical operation. Albeit there are men who, ordered to describe the noisy realm of an animal fancier, would begin by counting the hairs in the eyelashes of the guinea-pigs. In my father's descriptions there is the fidelity of the artist, and not that of the camera. All he wrote—the time once past when he could not choose but write—came to him. I except, of course, his writing for his own newspaper, and for "Lloyd's Weekly Paper," his connection with which he made one of the great successes of his life. Custom makes comments on passing events natural to the practised writer; and these are distinct and apart from the genius that is in him. This work is a relief to the more exhaustive process of creation.

The dream of my father's later days, was to break with the work-day life of literature, and to spend the close of his career in some sunny place in the South; where, at ease and in peace, he might work out one or two ideas that he had long held floating in his brain; and through which he should make his appeal to the judgment of posterity. He had done enough to tire him of the wear and tear of life. I have books full of his notes of his reading for these pet ideas, that were to be worked out far away from London. They are materials thrown pell-mell together, that give no clue to the design of the building which they were to decorate. They are monuments of patient closet-work, to be glanced over by all who value what my father actually accomplished, with regret. If he never obtained the settled leisure he anticipated—and that would have enabled him to carry out a few of his ambitious projects—at any rate, as I have already observed, he enjoyed about twelve years of absolute prosperity—of welcome change from one new scene to another, before he died. He had risen to the position for which he had toiled. He saw himself recognised from one end of the country to the other. Public invitations flocked to him from all sides. He presided at one or two great ceremonies. He presented the Shakspeare testimonial to Kossuth He took the chair at an annual soirée of the Bir-

mingham Literary Institution. But he disliked public appearances, and never cared to speak to an audience. On one great occasion, cheered to the echo by a crowded meeting of working men, whose cause he had espoused throughout his public life; he muttered a few words, and declared that his heart was too full—he must sit down—he must be excused. In vain, at a later period of the evening, patronising stump orators invited him to make a second attempt. He was not equal to a sentence. A deputation of Birmingham working men presented him with an onyx ring: and he could only stammer his thanks. These few essays proved to him that nature had not fitted him to shine at deputations nor upon platforms; nor to twirl an eye-glass playfully while thunders of applause were ringing in his ears: and so he turned a deaf ear to the friends who suggested Parliament to him.

"I speak with this—and this only," he said, showing his pen. He was not ambitious socially. Nothing would have persuaded him to scheme for a place: nor to back a minister. He used to amuse all who were near him when he dwelt on the value of business qualities: he being a man who had so little of the practical quality about him. A punctual correspondent he was, confining himself strictly to the questions he had to ask and answer. I have letters from him just half a line long. He was accused of unfriendly abruptness occasionally: but there was not the least ill-feeling in the fewness of the words. He talked against the practice of writing private letters—with an eye to some printer and publisher in the distance. There are humorous bits here and there in his notes, but at long intervals.*

* In the year 1843, Mr. Webster offered a prize of 500*l.* for the best five act comedy; whereupon my father wrote, a very long letter—for him—to Mr. Dickens. I take a bit of it:—"Of course you have flung 'Chuzzlewit' to the winds, and are hard at work upon a comedy. Somebody—I forget his name—told me that you were seen at the Haymarket door, with a wet newspaper in your hand, knocking frantically for Webster. Five hundred pounds for the *best* English comedy! As I think of the sum, I

In his letters he was "business-like;" but on the prospects of a profession for a boy; on profitable practical combinations; on commercial matters, he could not give an opinion. He was not a worldly-wise man. His emotions, his strong impulses, and the rapidity with which he acted—could not belong to a man of the world; who never loses sight of his own interests; and who best knows how to promote them, having made them the exclusive study of his life. My father would point to great examples of successful men—architects of their own fortune—who had risen from the depths of poverty, to a mighty independence. Men who have made great strides themselves, are apt to think that all people may walk in seven league boots who choose to put them on. My father was a little of this way of thinking. He had dared, and had won. The courage of daring went far; but the build of the athlete was extraordinary. He loved to see men or women beating down difficulties of all or any kinds: or, the heroism of patience plodding through dull years, cheerful to the end of the task. In his study, if a passage from Shakspeare was in question, he would go to his shelves, lift Mrs. Cowden Clarke's "Concordance" from its well-known corner, and, laying his hand upon the cover, would say invariably —before opening it—

"The work of a noble little woman."

He would turn the closely-printed pages over, and bid everybody present mark the extraordinary quantity of matter that was contained between the solid morocco boards. And then he would close the volume, and as he carried it back to its honoured place upon his shelves, he would repeat—

"And all that was done, by one noble little woman."

look loftily around this apartment of full twelve by thirteen—glance with poetic frenzy on a lark's turf that does duty for a lawn—take a vigorous inspiration of the 'double Bromptons' that are nodding defyingly at me through the diamond panes—and think the cottage, land, pigsty, all are mine, evoked from an ink-bottle, and labelled 'freehold,' by the call of Webster."

It was my custom—and he was not pleased when it was broken—to dine with my father every Sunday, when, as he told his intimate friends, he kept open house. Very often only a few young, very young, men of letters made up the party. The walk round the garden, into the poultry-yard, and upon the heath, was *de rigueur*. The garden was a picture of neatness, packed with flowers. The owner was in the fulness of his fame; was prosperous,—and in his country house on Putney Heath. He was still at work for the stage, having achieved a triumph with "Time Works Wonders." Mrs. Caudle was giving her weekly lectures in "Punch." There was not a cloud overhead. He went among great people—borne naturally into their society—but he kept his simple habits and his country fare, saying—"If my lord comes, he comes to the leg of mutton and a welcome, like the rest."

It was this simplicity that attracted Lord Nugent so often to West Lodge. But the Sundays were the brightest days, when the notabilities were away. Sundays in the study—where (it may be useful to tell certain clerical critics who wrote most uncharitably some six years ago of a man whom they knew not) the host never missed his morning alone with his Bible,—which he called his Church. It would have spared him many years of keen annoyance, could some of his critics, who delighted in painting him as a savage misanthrope with a sharp tongue; have seen him talking and laughing, and *not* saying severe things, in his study, on these Sundays. They might have seen the man who could be severe; because they would have seen a man whose eye flashed fire over some outrage done yesterday, which he had just read of in his Sunday paper: but the sweet, childish *fond* of the satirist would have been apparent also. The playful fancy, the light badinage with children (who never approached him without loving him); the petted dog; the friendly proffer of influence to some beginner; the chivalrous defence of an absent friend; the willing forgiveness of an old injury—these traits would have surely disarmed a few, who misrepresented

a generous friend and a delightful and wise companion, as a man whose heart was full of gall.

Past rancours are buried, as he was the first who desired they should be. I would not, in this short introduction, lift the least corner of a veil from one of them. The mission I have striven to discharge, in reverent affection for my father's memory, is one of peace between him and those who misunderstood him—between him and the few in the world who may have been taught to regard him as he certainly was not. This is why, in this introduction to the permanent form which my father's writings are about to take, I have been at some pains to put him in a right attitude for the world's judgment. I have described the difficult conditions under which he wrote. I have not explained away faults: I have rather confined myself to the proof that faults were laid to his charge, which were not his. I speak of him from an intimate view of him: with the partiality of a son who has gratitude and a loving remembrance in his heart, it is true; but only one placed in the relation of affection in which I stood to him could, with authority, undertake to draw a picture sufficiently close to life—not of the author—but of the man. I saw that his sharpness in attack came from a deep heart.

It is with a vivid idea of Douglas Jerrold at home, that I should like every reader to make acquaintance with his writings. This idea would explain what is called his bitterness here and there. He was a wit always and everywhere; and he wounded—sometimes even his friends. The sudden rush of a witticism that springs from a bright brain to the tongue, and is shot forth because it is a witticism and must fly, must be taken into account. The shaft is void of malice, if it have other poison in it. I can remember dozens of arrows, pointed as needles, that stung me; but they left no scar. In the midst of some of our pleasantest and most genial evenings at West Lodge, a shaft would fly and hit home. The victim might wince; but all would laugh, and the victim with the rest. Did these arrows, so often feathered

from "Wisdom's pinion," keep a friend from the wit's study fire, where the beech-wood crackled, lighting up faces that beamed under the welcome which made them children, for a time, of the family? For a joke which might escape, there would be hours of talk over books, passing literary news, or the political event of the day, or the whimsicalities of the last club night. These friendly meetings happened weekly, year after year; they travelled, with the host's household gods, to Circus Road, St. John's Wood, and lastly to Kilburn Priory, where death broke them up, and left not one of the company that had been so long happy together, with a dry eye. Was it not one of these near and dear friends who wrote—"If every one who had received a kindness at his hands, should lay a flower upon his tomb, a mountain of roses would rise over the grave of Douglas Jerrold"? I could fill many pages with letters from persons, to me unknown, that reached me after my father's death; written in grateful memory of kindnesses received. Mr. R. H. Horne wrote his grateful offering from Australia.* Humble witnesses sent their testimony of help given to them, from all parts of the country. The verse written in Douglas Jerrold's honour, would fill a goodly volume.

The author of "Tangled Talk" could not hold back his

* The kindness done to Mr. R. H. Horne, was, when he, finding himself in a pecuniary strait, proposed to write a novel. It was "The Dreamer and the Worker." Mr. Horne writes from Melbourne:—"The publication of this, by monthly chapters, in 'Jerrold's Magazine,' was the means of giving me peace of mind for a twelvemonth. Those who have ever known what it is to expect a twelvemonth of struggle and doubts, perhaps disappointments, and probably a thousand 'vexations of spirit' in dismal highways of the battle of life, and who have suddenly seen all this transformed into a sunny course for a fair exercise of the energies opened out before them, can best appreciate the kind and degree of such a service rendered at once, and in so frank and off-hand a manner. The grateful memory of that year's peace of mind is the flower I now send half across the globe, to be affectionately laid upon the grave of Douglas Jerrold. Hail! and farewell! 'Vale, vale! nos te ordine quo natura permittet sequemur."

testimony to my father's kindly nature. He said: "Within these three years" (writing in 1857) "I have been once or twice his debtor for kind and encouraging words, and I would willingly throw my little flower. On the very few occasions upon which I saw him personally—not more than twice or thrice, and under his own roof—I found him the most genial, sincere, and *fatherly* of men; perfectly simple, a man who looked straight at you, and spoke without *arrière pensée*—without any of that double consciousness which makes the talk of some men of talent disagreeable—and most thoroughly *human*. That 'abounding humanity,' which I once said elsewhere is the distinguishing characteristic of Mr. Jerrold's writing, shone out conspicuously in all his behaviour. It was never necessary, as it is in conversing with too many, to say, by implication, 'Never mind the book, and the reputation, and the wit, and the wits, and what I am thinking of you—am I not a man and a brother?' Mr. Jerrold recognised the manhood and the brotherhood so fully at starting, that there was nothing to be said about it; and your intercourse with him went smoothly upon its true basis—the natural 'proclivity' of one human creature for another. * * * His writings are full of a gracious domestic purity, quite distinct from the claptrap of the playwright or the novelist. The poetry that was in Mr. Jerrold has, I suspect, been much underrated by the general public."

I cannot altogether pass over the aspect of my father as "a clubable man." He was a most social man: and in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden—the region sacred to social clubs—it was that, when a very young man, he met a number of friends who were clubbed together, in an humble tavern, under the magic name of Shakspeare, each member contributing a poem, essay, or drawing, in the poet's honor. The club was called "The Mulberries"—and the book in which the members' contributions were kept, were—The Mulberry Leaves. The young men were all destined to be heard of in the world—save poor William Godwin (the great Godwin's son)

who died young, smitten with cholera; but who had, as my father testified—"an unfolded genius worthy of his name." When Elton, the actor, one of the Mulberries, was drowned; my father took occasion to produce one of Elton's mulberry leaves as illustrative of his "graceful intelligence." He then said of the Mulberries: "The society in which these poems were produced, is now dissolved. In its early strength it numbered some who, whatever may have been, or may yet be their success in life, cannot look back to that society of kindred thoughts and sympathising hopes, without a sweetened memory—without the touches of an old affection. My early boy-friend, Laman Blanchard; and Kenny Meadows, a dear friend too, whose names have become musical in the world's ear, were of that society—of that knot of wise and jocund men, then unknown, but gaily struggling." The Mulberry Club blossomed into the Shakspeare Club—and, with great names on its list—died. My father contributed "Shakspeare's Crab-tree" to the leaves, and on rare occasions, when the friends were few, would sing it, in that soft, sweet voice, he had to the last. He wrote other things also for "the leaves." The theme ever tempted him—to essay some new and quaint tapestry work on the beloved poet—now it was "Shakspeare at Bankside," and now "Shakspeare in China." I can well imagine how his mind was set to music, and winged with dreams, when he read this passage from Godwin's "Essay on Sepulchres." —"I cannot tell that the wisest mandarin now living in China is not indebted for part of his energy and sagacity to Shakspeare and Milton, even though it should happen that he never heard of their names." This subtlety was exactly suited to treatment by my father.

Other clubs succeeded the Mulberries. The coterie of literary men and artists who were struggling together "through difficulties to fame" felt that "the bow should be sometimes loose." Their clubs were merry meetings of wise men: and many wise heads still meet, to play like boys—and then go home to the studio again, the better for the laugh and the

song. In all classes this loosening of the bow is sought. My father, true to his life, tried to extend club luxuries to the many. He founded the Whittington Club.* Gartered notabilities delight to have a steak, from a gridiron within view, and to drink from pewter pots, and smoke long clay pipes. The "Hooks and Eyes" and "Our Club" were clubs, which, in later life, my father founded: and he was the life and soul of the wisely merry meetings of men, to meet whom, a traveller making notes, would give half he possessed. He was welcome, as much for the overflowing humanity and the boy-freshness that were in him, as for the flashes of his wit and the brilliancy of his conversation. He brought fresh air with him into the room. Professor Masson said of him: "There was, perhaps, no conversation in which Mr. Jerrold took part, that did not elicit from him half a dozen good things. To recollect such good things is proverbially difficult; and hence many of Jerrold's died within the week, or never got three miles from Covent Garden. Some, however, lived, and got into circulation—a little the worse for wear—in the provinces; and not a few have been exported.

* At the opening, after a desperate effort, he nerved himself to take the chair at the first meeting, and to say:—"If we have clubs composed, I may say, of canes with gold heads—or, if not always with gold heads, at least with plenty of gold about them—if we have clubs of nobles, wherefore not clubs of clerks? For my own part, there are lions and tigers, even in the highest heraldry, for which I have certainly not more respect than for the cat, the legendary cat of Richard Whittington. Nevertheless, the proposed institution of our club has, in two or three quarters, been criticised as an impertinence—as almost a revolutionary movement, disrespectful to the vested interests of worshipful society. It has really been inferred that the social advantages contemplated by our institution would be vulgarised by being made cheap. These pensive prophets seem to consider the refinements of life to be like the diamond—rarity making its only worth; and with these people, multiply diamonds ten thousandfold, and for such reason, they would no longer be considered fit even for a gentleman. These folks have only sympathy with the past. They love to contemplate the world with their heads over their shoulders, turned as far back as anatomy will permit to them that surpassing luxury."

One joke of his was found lately beating about the coast of Sweden, seeking in vain for a competent Swedish translation; and the other day a tourist from London, seeing two brawny North Britons laughing together immoderately on a rock near Cape Wrath, with a heavy sea dashing at their feet, discovered that the cause of their mirth was a joke of Mr. Jerrold's, which they had intercepted on its way to the Shetlands. Another club friend wrote in the Quarterly Review, "In the bright sallies of conversational wit he has no surviving equal." Mr. Hepworth Dixon, who was also a club friend, said: "His wit was all steel points, and his talk was like squadrons of lancers in evolution. Not one pun, we have heard, is to be found in his writings. His wit stood nearer to poetic fancy than to broad humour."

These clubs of kindred men could not but delight a man of his strongly social temperament. He insisted, however, that all the club appointments should be simple: plain, clean service, and little more than hermit's fare. He was no public speaker, as I have observed: but at a social board—among club friends, he would break out into a bouquet of fireworks.

At a dinner given, at the Museum Club, to Mr. Leigh Hunt, he was especially happy, in proposing the health of the guest of the evening. He said of Hunt—"even in his hottest warfare his natural sense of beauty and gentleness was so great that, like David of old, he armed his sling with shining pebbles of the brook, and never pelted even his fiercest enemy with mud." Hunt was happy in reply. He said that "if his friend Jerrold had the sting of the bee, he had also his honey."

I have not space here for further examples of the good things that rained, when, in happy mood and congenial company, my father was talking.

Death reached him in the full tide of his life. The ship came to anchor in mid-stream. When my father had fairly settled himself in his house at Kilburn Priory, in 1856; and had arranged his study leading to his garden—so that he could see

his noble rhododendrons from his desk: he felt that he had settled at last, for the remainder of his days. He had projects enough, of travel that was not to be confined to Europe: but here his house and centre would be, henceforth. If he did not travel much—he was, in imagination, the circumnavigator of the globe. He never put his hat on without wishing it was a wide-awake, shielding him from an Italian sun, or shading his eyes on the Nile. At one time he had a project for buying Sark,—he was so enraptured with its wildness. "I am here," he wrote to Mr. John Forster, "in this most wild, most solitary, and most beautiful place. No dress — no fashion — no respectability — nothing *but* beauty and grandeur, with the sea rolling and roaring, at times, 'tween me and Fleet Street, as though I should never walk there again." In the winter of 1856, and the spring of 1857, what projects of travel to be done in the coming summer, were discussed in the snug study! Nice, Portugal, Rome! were to be visited. Friend Baron de Forrester's boat was to receive a laughing company, when the summer came. My father had been ill recently—and desponding—but he was better—and it was spring. The birds chattered at his dressing-room windows: and the buds were bursting! He turned a gay face upon life; and laughing said, again and again—"a man was exactly as old as he felt." Yet he had received a shock in the autumn—when Mr. Gilbert à Beckett died at Boulogne. He wrote to Mr. John Forster, his heart full: "Never was a family so united, so suddenly and so wholly made desolate. Competence, position, mutual affection, 'and all that makes the happier man,' and all now between four boards!" This feeling lasted in his mind. The spring, the bright mornings, however, gave him a new lease of life. He trained his flowers: strolled upon his lawn: saw his friends—and he had many—and was never in happier circumstances.

It was in the last week of May that he accompanied Mr. Dickens to a dinner given by Mr. W. H. Russell, at Greenwich. He was ailing then: but he attributed his illness to the smell of

the new paint on the garden steps leading from his study. He battled with his weakness, as he walked to the boat, with Mr. Dickens and Mr. Russell. "I have a lively recollection of him," Mr. Dickens wrote to me, "stamping about Elm-tree Court (with his hat in one hand, and the other pushing his hair back), laughing in his heartiest manner, at a ridiculous remembrance we had in common, which I had presented in some exaggerated light, to divert him. We found our boat, and went down the river, and looked at the Leviathan which was building, and talked all the way." A happy day was spent at Greenwich, and my father returned home in better health than he had left. "I went down to Gad's Hill next morning," writes Mr. Dickens, "where he was to write to me after a little while, appointing his own time for coming to see me there. A week afterwards, another passenger in the railway carriage in which I was on my way to London Bridge, opened his morning paper, and said, 'Douglas Jerrold is dead!'"

It was but too true. He breathed his last, in our arms, at noon, on the 8th day of June, 1857. To the last he was calm, and resigned; with most Christian courage took leave of all; and left directions—and died, saying—seeing us all about his bed—"This is as it should be." We laid him in Norwood Cemetery, on a sunny day in June (15th) near the grave of his boy-friend Laman Blanchard, who had gone before him: and in one year and eleven months afterwards, we laid at his side, the remains of her who had sweetened and sustained him through his life: the best wife I have ever seen in this world—and a mother whose loving eyes, no worldly pleasures could ever turn, for one moment, from her children.

It now remains for me to leave this collected edition of the works which my father selected to represent him in the literature of his country, to the judgment of the public. I most cordially thank his old and dear friends Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, for having given me an opportunity of putting the brief story of

his literary life with his writings; because I feel that the reader's knowledge of his story is necessary to the full enjoyment of his writings. Where I have ventured upon criticism, the venture has been made in the hope that it might lead to a knowledge at once true and close, of the subject of my memoir.

BLANCHARD JERROLD.

ST. GILES AND ST. JAMES.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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DURING the progress of the original publication of "St. Giles and St. James"—which it is hoped is rendered somewhat less faulty in the present revised edition—certain critics would charge the writer with a cleaving desire to despoil the high for the profit of the low; with a besetting tendency to mum as a sort of moral Robin Hood, stripping the rich of their virtues that only the veriest poor might strut in the plunder. In reply to this, I will content myself with saying that I somewhat confidently await the verdict of a different opinion from the reader who may honour these pages with a dispassionate perusal.

It has been my endeavour to show in the person of St. Giles the victim of an ignorant disregard of the social claims of the poor upon the rich; of the governed million upon the governing few; to present—I am well aware how imperfectly; but with no wilful exaggeration of the portraiture—the picture of the infant pauper reared in brutish ignorance; a human waif of dirt and darkness. Since the original appearance of this story, the reality of this picture, in all its vital and appalling horror, has forced itself upon the legislature; has engaged its anxious thoughts; and will ultimately triumph in its humanising sympathies. I will only add that upon an after revision of this story, I cannot think myself open to the charge of bedizening St. Giles

at the cost of St. James ; or of making Hog Lane the treasury of all the virtues to the moral sacking of May Fair.

The completion of the first volume of a collected edition of his writings—scattered over the space of years—is an opportunity tempting to the vanity of a writer to indulge in a retrospect of the circumstances that first made authorship his hope, as well as of the general tenor of his after vocation. I will not, at least, in these pages, yield to the inducement ; further than to say that, self-helped and self-guided, I began the world at an age when, as a general rule, boys have not laid down their primers ; that the cockpit of a man-of-war was at thirteen exchanged for the struggle of London ; that appearing in print ere perhaps the meaning of words was duly mastered—no one can be more alive than myself to the worthlessness of such early mutterings.

In conclusion, I submit this volume to the generous interpretation of the reader. Some of it has been called "bitter:" indeed, "bitter" has, I think, a little too often been the ready word when certain critics have condescended to bend their eyes upon my page : so ready, that were my ink redolent of myrrh and frankincense, I well know the sort of ready-made criticism that would cry, with a denouncing shiver, "aloes ; aloes."

D. J.

West Lodge, Putney Lower Common,
July 9, 1851.

ST. GILES AND ST. JAMES.

CHAPTER I.

The streets were empty. Pitiless cold had driven all who had the shelter of a roof to their homes: and the north-east blast seemed to howl in triumph above the untrodden snow. Winter was at the heart of all things. The wretched, dumb with excessive misery, suffered, in stupid resignation, the tyranny of the season. Human blood stagnated in the breast of want; and death in that despairing hour losing its terrors, looked, in the eyes of many a wretch, a sweet deliverer. It was a time when the very poor, barred from the commonest things of earth, take strange counsel with themselves, and, in the deep humility of destitution, believe they are the burden and the offal of the world.

It was a time when the easy, comfortable man, touched with finest sense of human suffering, gives from his abundance; and, whilst bestowing, feels almost ashamed that, with such wide-spread misery circled round him, he has all things fitting; all things grateful. The smitten spirit asks wherefore he is not of the multitude of wretchedness; demands to know for what especial excellence he is promoted above the thousand, thousand starving creatures: in his very tenderness for misery, tests his privilege of exemption from a woe that withers manhood in man, bowing him downward to the brute. And so questioned, this man gives in modesty of spirit—in very thankfulness of soul. His alms are not cold, formal charities; but reverent sacrifices to his suffering brother.

It was a time when selfishness hugs itself in its own warmth; with no other thoughts than of its pleasant possessions; all made pleasanter, sweeter, by the desolation around. When the mere worldling rejoices the more in his warm chamber, because it is so bitter cold without; when he eats and drinks with whetted appetite, because he hears of destitution, prowling like a wolf around his well-barred house; when, in fine, he bears his every

comfort about him with the pride of a conqueror. A time when such a man sees in the misery of his fellow-beings nothing save his own victory of fortune—his own successes in a suffering world. To such a man the poor are but the tattered slaves that grace his triumph.

It was a time, too, when human nature often shows its true divinity, and with misery like a garment clinging to it, forgets its wretchedness in sympathy with suffering. A time, when in the cellars and garrets of the poor are acted scenes which make the noblest heroism of life; which prove the immortal texture of the human heart, not wholly seared by the branding-iron of the torturing hours. A time when in want, in anguish, in throes of mortal agony, some seed is sown that bears a flower in heaven.

Such was the time, the hour approaching midnight, when a woman sat on a door-step in a London street. Was she sleeping, or was she another victim of the icy season? Her head had fallen backward against the door, and her face shone like a white stone in the moonlight. There was a terrible history in that face; cut and lined as it was by the twin-workers, vice and misery. Her temples were sunken; her brow wrinkled and pinched; and her thin, jagged mouth, in its stony silence, breathed a frightful eloquence. It was a hard mystery to work out, to look upon that face, and try to see it in its babyhood. Could it be thought that that woman was once a child?

Still she was motionless—breathless. And now, a quick, tripping footstep sounds in the deserted street; and a woman, thinly, poorly clad, but clean and neat withal, approaches the door. She is humming a tune, a blithe defiance to the season, and her manner is of one hastening homeward. "Good God! if it isn't a corpse!" she cried, standing suddenly fixed before what seemed, in truth, the effigy of death. In a moment, recovering herself, she stooped towards the sitter, and gently shook her. "Stone-cold—frozen! Lord in heaven! that his creatures should perish in the street!" And then the woman, with a piercing shriek, called the watch; but the watch, true to its reputation for sound substantial sleep, answered not. "Watch—watch!" screamed the woman with increasing shrillness; but the howling of the midnight wind was the only response. A moment she paused; then looked at what she deemed the dead; and flinging her arms about her, flew back along the path she had trod. With scarcely breath to do common credit to her powers of scolding, she drew up at a watch-box, and addressed herself to the peaceful man within. "Why, watch—here! a pretty fellow!—people pay rates, and—watch, watch!—there 's a dead woman—dead, I tell

you—watch—pay rates, and are let to die, and—watch—watch—watch!" And still she screamed, and at length, clawed at and shook the modest wooden tenement which, in those happy but not distant days of England, sheltered many of England's civil guardians.

The watchman was coiled up for unbroken repose. He had evidently settled the matter with himself to sleep until called to breakfast by the tradesman who, at the corner post, spread his hospitable table for the early wayfarers who loved saloop. Besides, the watchman was at least sixty-five years old; twenty years he had been guardian of the public peace, and he knew—no one better—that on such a night even robbery would take a holiday, forgetting the cares and profits of business in comfortable blankets. At length, but slowly, did the watchman answer the summons. He gradually uncoiled himself; and whilst the woman's tongue rang—rang like a bell—he calmly pushed up his hat, and opening his two small, swinish eyes, looked at the intruder.

"Well! after that I hope you are awake—and after that ——"

"What 's the matter?" asked the watchman, feeling that the hour of saloop was not arrived, and surlily shaking himself at the disappointment, "What 's the matter?"

"The matter! Poppy-head!"

"Any of your bad language, and I shall lock you up." And this the watchman said with quite the air of a man who keeps his word.

"There 's a woman froze to death," cried the disturber of the watchman's peace.

"That was last night," said the watchman.

"I tell you, to-night, man—to-night. She 's on a door-step; there"—and the woman pointed down the street. "I should like to know what we pay you watchmen for, if poor creatures are to drop down dead with cold on the highway."

The watchman lifted his lantern to the face of the speaker—it was a frank, lively, good-humoured face, with about five-and-thirty years lightly laid upon it—and closing one eye, as if the act gave peculiar significance to what he said, slowly observed, syllable by syllable, "Any more of your imperance, and"—here he took an oath, confirming it with a smart blow of his stick upon the pavement, "and I 'll lock you up." The woman made some answer; but the words were lost, ground by the watchman's rattle, which he whirled about. As cricket answers cricket, the rattle found a response. Along the street the sound was caught up, prolonged, and carried forward; and small bye-lanes gave forth a wooden voice—a voice that cried to all the

astounded streets, "Justice is awake!" And then lantern after lantern glimmered in the night: one lantern advancing with a sober, a considerate pace; another, with a sort of flutter; another, dancing like a jack-o'-lantern over the snow. And so, lantern after lantern, with watchmen behind, came and clustered about the box of him, who was on the instant greeted as Drizzle.

"What 's the row?" cried an Irishman—a young fellow of about sixty, who flourished his stick, and stamped upon the pavement, like indignant virtue, impatient of a wrong. "What 's the row? Is it her?" and he was about to lay his civil hand upon the woman.

Every watchman asked his separate question; it seemed to be his separate right: and Drizzle, as though respecting the privilege of his brethren, heard them all—yes, every one—before he answered. He then replied, very measuredly—"A woman is froze to death."

"What! agin?" cried two or three.

"Agin," answered Drizzle. Then turning himself round, he headed the watch; and motioning to the woman to show the way, he slowly led his fellows down the street. In due time, they arrived at the spot.

"Froze to death?" cried Drizzle doubtingly, holding his lantern to the bloodless, rigid features of the miserable outcast.

"Froze to death?" asked every other watchman, on taking a like survey.

"No,—no; not dead! Thank God! not dead," exclaimed the woman, stooping towards her wretched sister. "Her heart beats—I *think* it beats."

"Werry drunk; but not a bit dead," said Drizzle: and his brethren—one and all—murmured.

"Well! what are you going to do with her?" asked the woman, vehemently.

"What should we do with her?" cried Drizzle. "She isn't dead, and she isn't a breaking the peace."

"But she will be dead, if she 's left here, and so I desire"——

"You desire!" said Drizzle, "and after all, what 's your name, and where do you come from?"

"My name 's Mrs. Aniseed, I live in Short's Gardens—and I come from—the Lord ha' mercy! what 's that?" she cried as something stirred beneath the ends of the woman's shawl, that lay upon her lap. With the words, Mrs. Aniseed plucked the shawl aside, and discovered a sleeping infant. "What a heavenly babe!" she cried: and, truly, the child in its marble whiteness looked beautiful; a lovely human bud,—a sweet, unsullied sojourner of earth, cradled on the knees of misery and vice.

For an instant, the watchmen in silence gazed upon the babe. Even their natures, hardened in scenes of crime and destitution, were touched by the appealing innocence of the child. "Poor little heart!" said one. "God help it!" cried another.

Yes; God help it! And with such easy adjuration do we leave thousands and tens of thousands of human souls to want and ignorance; doom them, when yet sleeping the sleep of guiltlessness, to future devils—their own unguided passions. We make them outcasts, wretches; and then punish, in their wickedness, our own selfishness—our own neglect. We cry "God help the babes," and hang the men.

Yet a moment. The child is still before us. May we not see about it—contending for it—the principles of good and evil? A contest between the angels and the fiends? Come hither, statesman; you who live within a party circle; you who nightly fight some miserable fight; continually strive in some selfish struggle for power and place, considering men only as tools, the merest instruments of your aggrandisement; come here, in the wintry street, and look upon God's image in its babyhood! Consider this little *man*. Are not creatures such as these the noblest, grandest things of earth? Have they not solemn natures—are they not subtly touched for the highest purposes of human life? Come they not into this world to grace and dignify it? There is no spot, no coarser stuff in the pauper flesh before you, that indicates a lower nature. There is no felon mark upon it—no natural formation indicating the thief in its baby fingers—no inevitable blasphemy upon its lips. It lies before you a fair, unsullied thing, fresh from the hand of God. Will you, without an effort, let the great fiend stamp his fiery brand upon it? Shall it, even in its sleeping innocence, be made a trading thing by misery and vice? A creature borne from street to street, a piece of living merchandise for mingled beggary and crime? Say; what, with its awakening soul, shall it learn? What lessons whereby to pass through life, making an item in the social sum? Why, cunning will be its wisdom; hypocrisy its truth; theft its natural law of self-preservation. To this child, so nurtured, so taught, your whole code of morals, nay, your brief right and wrong, are writ in stranger figures than Egyptian hieroglyphs, and—time passes—and you scourge the creature never taught, for the heinous guilt of knowing nought but ill! The good has been a sealed book to him, and the dunce is punished with the gaol.

Doubtless, there are great statesmen; wizards in bullion and bank-paper; thinkers profound in cotton, and every turn and variation of the markets, abroad and at home. But there are

statesmen yet to come; statesmen of nobler aims—of more heroic action; teachers of the people; vindicators of the universal dignity of man; apostles of the great social truth that knowledge, which is the spiritual light of God, like his material light, was made to bless and comfort all men. And when these men arise—and it is worse than weak, it is sinful, to despair of them—the youngling poor will not be bound upon the very threshold of human life, and made, by want and ignorance, life's shame and curse. There is not a babe lying in the public street on its mother's lap—the unconscious mendicant to ripen into the criminal—that is not a reproach to the state; a scandal and a crying shame upon men who study all politics, save the politics of the human heart.

To return to the child of our story; to the baby St. Giles; for indeed it is he.

In a moment, Mrs. Aniseed caught the infant to her bosom; and pressed it to her cheek. As she did so, she turned pale, and tears came into her eyes. "It 's dead," she cried, "blessed angel! the cold—the cruel cold has killed it."

"Nonsense," said Drizzle, "the woman 's for killing everything. It 's no more dead than its mother here, and"—and here the watchman turned to his companions for counsel—"and what are we to do with her?"

"We can't take her to the workhouse," said one, "it 's past the hour."

"Past the hour!" exclaimed Mrs. Aniseed, still hugging and warming the babe at her bosom—"it isn't past the hour to die, is it?"

"You 're a foolish, wiolent woman," said Drizzle. "I tell you what we must do; we 'll take her to the watch-house."

"The watch-house!" cried Mrs. Aniseed. "Poor soul! what have you got to comfort her with there?"

"Comfort! Well, I 'm sure—you do talk it strong! As if women sitting about in doorways was to be treated with comfort. Howsomever, mates," said the benevolent Drizzle, "for once we 'll try the workhouse."

With this, two of the watchmen raised the woman, and stumbling at almost every step, they bore their burden on. "Make haste!" cried Drizzle, doubtless yearning for the hospitality of his box, "make haste: if the cold doesn't bite a man like nippers!" And so, shambling along, and violently smiting in their turn both arms against his sides, Drizzle preceded his fellows, and at length halted at the workhouse. "It hasn't a wery kindly look, has it?" he cried, as he peered at the mansion of the poor. "All gone to bed, I dare say. And catch any on

'em getting up such a night as this." So saying, Drizzle pulled manfully at the bell, as though fairly to test his powers of attack with the power of resistance within. "The governor, and matern, the nusses, the porter, and all on 'em snoring in lavender." The bare thought of this Elysium added strength to Drizzle's arm, and again he pulled. "Had hot elder wine, or dog's-nose, or something o' the sort, to pull their precious nightcaps on!" And again Drizzle tugged with renewed purpose. "They think o' the poor just as much as they think o' meat and 'tatos,—as only things to live upon." And still the workhouse bell rang a comfortless accompaniment to the watchman's indignation. "Now, I know it; I could swear it"—cried Drizzle—"they 're every one on 'em awake; they can't be otherwise; wide awake, and thinking how precious nice their blankets is, and how cruel cold it is here. Yes; they hear the bell—they do; they can't help it; and they say to themselves, there 's some poor devil outside that 's frost-bit and going to die, and wants a hot bed, and a dose of brandy, and all that, to bring the life into him again; and he won't have it. No—it's past the hours, and he must come agin to-morrow. That 's what the varmint say"—cried Drizzle—"that 's what they say to themselves, and then they go off, and sleep all the sweeter for knowing it. It 's as good as another blanket to 'em—it is," exclaimed the watchman, enraged by the picture his fancy had executed, no less than by his abortive exertions at the workhouse-bell. "And now, what 's to be done? Why, nothin, but to go o the watch-house."

"And I 'll take the baby home with me," said Mrs. Aniseed, "and warm it, and give it something, and—"

"Can't allow that," said one of the watchmen.

"Why not, poor lamb?" asked Drizzle, suddenly tender. "She 'll take care of it—and what are we to do with it? You don't think she 's a goin to steal it?"

"Steal it!" cried the indignant Mrs. Aniseed.

"I should think not," said Drizzle. "Folks needn't steal things o' that sort, I 'm sure; the market 's overloaded with 'em; they 're to be had for nothin', and thank 'ee too. So you 'll take care of it till the mother comes round?"

"To be sure, I will, poor dear heart!" answered Mrs. Aniseed, hugging the child closer.

"And your name 's Aniseed, eh? Yes? And you live in Short's Gardens? All right: to-morrow morning bring the baby to the watch-house. We 've nobody to nurse it there, neither wet nor dry."

This touch of humour was not lost upon the watchmen, for they acknowledged it with a loud laugh. Then one of them

suddenly alive to the humanities of his calling, cried, "Let's bear a hand with the woman, or I'm blessed if she won't be dead outright."

And with this, the watchmen bore the mother to the watch-house, and Mrs. Aniseed hurried with the child to her home.

CHAPTER II.

It was past twelve when Mrs. Aniseed reached her abiding-place in Short's Gardens: a place, whose name gave warranty of by-gone rusticity; of a time when St. Giles really breathed in the Fields; when blossoming hawthorns offered incense to the saint; when linnets, building in the furze, sang matin hymns to the protector of the leper. Many changes has St. Giles beheld: other and better changes are, we hope, to come. Here, in the fields, was good St. Giles installed the physician and the comforter of leprosy. Here was he known, and prayed to as intercessor between Heaven and suffering man. Disease, the born thing of dirt and poverty, knelt at his shrine and begged for health. And years passed on, and the disease abated. The plague of human kind—arrested by human knowledge and energy—was smitten down, and the leper became a sufferer unknown. And then St. Giles gathered about him the children of poverty. He became the titular saint of rags and squalor. The destitute and the criminal took refuge under his protecting wings. The daily hypocrite on crutches owned St. Giles for his protector; cheats and mumpers of every sort—the town brigands, that with well-aimed falsehoods make wayfaring compassion stand and deliver—dwelt about the shrine of St. Giles, and lied and cheated, starved and revelled in his name. A St. Giles's bird was a human animal of prey—a raven, a kite, a carrion-crow. And once again, the saint presided over filth, and its born evil, disease; again, St. Giles was sought by lepers, most hideous, most incurable—the lepers of crime and poverty.

And—it cannot be doubted—St. Giles suffered in reputation from the unseemly flocks that gathered about him. In the imaginations of men, he became a low, pauper saint; a saint of vulgar tastes, and vile employments; a saint that was scarcely spoken of, save in connection with craft, and ill manners, and drunkenness, and lying, and thieving. Even saints suffer in renown by constant association with poverty and wickedness.

And then they made St. Giles a hanging saint: made him keep

a sort of half-way house, where he offered the final bowl to the Tyburn-bound felon. St. Giles was poor, and was assorted with the gallows. That ignominy is, however, past. Now St. Giles does not offer a comforting draught to thieves: no; he only breeds them.

And now is St. Giles to be wholly reformed. He is to be made a cleanly saint. His cellars, where his infant votaries are begotten for crime, and nurtured for the gaol, are to be destroyed—filled up again. The demon typhus is to be killed with sweet air and fresh water. The brotherhood of St. Giles are no longer to be of the Blessed Order of Filth; they are to wear linen, and wash their hands and faces!

To our story.

It was past twelve, when Mrs. Aniseed ascended the third flight of stairs that led to her home—her one room. A voice was heard proceeding from that room—a voice, droning a street-ballad of the day. "Why, Susan, I'm blessed if I hadn't given you up," said the voice, the owner of it being a short, broad-chested block of a man, seated before a tolerable fire, which, with half-contemplative look, he continued to scrutinise; never turning his eye towards the partner of his bosom and his hearth. And thus, complacently whiffing smoke from a ruin of a pipe, he continued to stare at the coals and talk: "If I didn't think somebody had run away with you. I've been home this half-hour. Not much luck again to-night. Hardly enough to pay for the link. Howsomever," said Jem, as though still talking to the fire, "I've got something for you."

"And I've got something for you, Jem;" said his wife, seating herself. "Guess what it is."

"No: I never guess with a woman," said Jem; "a man has no chance." And then he asked, "What is it?"

"Look here," cried his wife, unfolding her apron, and discovering the sleeping babe.

Bright Jem jumped from his seat, and now looking at the child—and now in his wife's face—asked, with solemn voice, and uplifted eyebrows, "Where did you get it?"

"I found it, Jem," said the woman.

"Found it! Well, next time, when luck 's upon you, I hope you 'll find something better." And then, with his forefinger he touched the baby's cheek, and said, somewhat tenderly, "Dear little heart!"

"Can't you see who it 's like, Jem?" asked Mrs. Aniseed, and her eyes softened.

"Why, it 's like all babies," answered Jem. "I never see any difference in 'em: all the same, like Dutch cheeses."

"Ha! Jem," said Mrs. Aniseed, "you've never been a mother."

"No," said Jem.

"Else you'd have seen that it's as like our dear lost Dick as one angel's like another"

"Not a bit—not a bit," said Jem in words; but his tone and manner said, "And so it is."

"Oh, I saw it—in a minute, Jem; and I see it now, dear little fellow. He'd ha' been dead, stone-dead in the morning, if I hadn't come up as I did."

And Jem, placing his hands upon his knees, and staring in his wife's face, asked, "And where did you find him?" Whereupon, Mrs. Aniseed—with commendable brevity—narrated the incident of discovery already chronicled.

"Well, poor little chap," said Jem, resuming his seat and his pipe, "he's welcome to board and lodging for one night."

Mrs. Aniseed made no answer But as the child began to wake, she bustled about the room, and soon prepared for it a sufficing supper. Few were the minutes, and she had the child upon her lap with its bare legs almost roasting at the fire, and with more than infantine energy, trying to swallow the victuals, spoon and all

"Why, if he doesn't eat like a young sparrow," said Jem, eyeing the little feeder askance. "He's not strange in a strange place, any how."

"Oh, Jem!" cried Mrs. Aniseed as though she was unburthening her heart of its dearest wish—"Oh, Jem, how I should like to keep it!" Jem said nothing; but slowly taking the pipe from his mouth, he looked all the amazement he was master of. Of course his wife took no notice of this. She merely continued: "I'm sure, Jem, the dear little soul would bring a blessing on us."

"Yes, and another belly to fill; and another back to cover; and two more feet to shoe; and"—and we know not what inventory of obligations Jem would have made out; but his wife—a fine tactician—began to chirrup, and cry to the child, and make all those legendary noises of the nursery, handed down to us from the time that Eve nursed Cain. Jem was in a moment silenced. Whereupon, in due time, Mrs. Aniseed set the child up, and then danced it in the very face of Jem, calling upon him to remark its extraordinary loveliness, and by consequence, its extraordinary resemblance to their lost Dick.

"He's a sharp little shaver," said Jem, gently pinching the baby's cheeks– when the baby laughed.

"If it doesn't seem to know what you say, Jem," cried Mrs.

Aniseed ; and then with new vehemence she added, "Something tells me it would be lucky to us."

"Nonsense, woman!" cried Jem ; "how can we afford such fancies? You'll be thinking of keeping pug-dogs and parrots next. Besides, it's impossible, with the playhouse going down as it is."

"I've been quite in the way of babies to-night," said Mrs. Aniseed, a little shifting the subject ; "young master's come to town."

"Oh, a boy is it?" grumbled Jem. "Well, he's a better chance of it than that little chap." Mrs. Aniseed drew a very long, deep sigh, intending it for an emphatic affirmation. "He's a good big gold spoon in his mouth already. Humph! a boy is it? And what, after all, Mrs. Aniseed, what business had you there? You know I don't like it—and you *will* go."

Now this remonstrance applied to the visits of Mrs. Aniseed to a certain house in St. James's-square ; at which house a younger spinster sister of the linkman's wife flourished as under kitchen-maid. She, however, had a due contempt for St. Giles's, and all its dwellers ; and on certain occasions had not scrupled to express her wonderment that her sister, "who after all was not sich a very plain gal," should have ever taken up with so low a husband as a nasty linkman. She had somehow compared the big bouquets of the footmen with the pitch and hemp with which Bright Jem was wont to earn what she called "his low, dirty bread," and her nice sense of sweetness was grievously offended by the contrast. Sometimes, too, out of purest condescension, Kitty Muggs—for Muggs was the virgin name which no odoriferous lacquey had as yet robbed her of—would visit Short's Gardens. At such times it was impossible for her not to make it known to St. Giles the vast debt of gratitude due from it to St. James:—a debt which Bright Jem—as one of the representatives of the meaner locality—never by the smallest instalment ever permitted himself to pay.

"As for Kitty, he was always very glad to see her if she 'd leave her nonsense behind her; but she always walked into the room as if she walked upon eggs ; always brushed the chair afore she 'd sit down ; and always moved with her petticoats lifted up, as if the white honest deal boards of the floor was so much gutter-mud. And then the tea was always so coarse, and not a bit like their gunpowder ; and the bacon was rusty, not a bit like their hams ; and in fact there was nothing, no, not even the flesh and blood of Short's Gardens, at all like the flesh and blood of the West-End. Why didn't she keep to her own dripping, and not cast her nose up like a flounder's tail, at the clean, wholesome food of other

people? He hated all such stuff; and what's more, he wouldn't have it." Such, again and again, had been the words of Bright Jem; and he never heard of the sisterly visits of his wife to the aristocratic kitchen-maid, without protesting against them.

"Well," said Mrs. Aniseed, "she's the only relation I have in the world, and I can't help seeing her. Poor girl! she's young and giddy, but she doesn't mean nothing."

"Young and giddy!" cried Jem; "well, I don't know at what time of life geese leave off their giddiness, but she's old enough to be the mother of a good many goslings. Got a boy, have they? —ha! they've been wanting one long enough. Got a young St. James? Well, babies in that quarter may be made of finer sort of stuff than hereabouts; but he can hardly be a handsomer little thing than young St. Giles here." Saying this, Jem held out his arms, and in an instant Mrs. Aniseed had placed the baby in them. "Well, he is a capital little fellow," cried Jem. "Has he done sucking, I wonder?"

"To be sure he has," averred Mrs. Aniseed on her own responsibility.

"A lively little dog, isn't he?" and Jem danced the child upon his knee, and snapped his fingers at it, and the child leapt up, and laughed, and crowed. And then Jem looking sadly at the infant, said, "And he *is* like poor little Dick. I see it now, Susan; he *is* like Dick."

Mrs. Aniseed made no answer; but with great alacrity bustled about the room, and prepared supper. Such preparation was soon made. "Now I'll take him—you can't eat with him in your lap," she said.

"Let him be; I'll manage it—I used to do it once. Well, well—what's gone can't be helped. It's no use a grievin', Susan, is it?—no, not a bit. If times wasn't so bad, now—to be sure he won't take much as he is; but then he'll grow bigger, and—"

"And I'm sure he'd be a comfort to us," cried Mrs. Aniseed, "he looks like it."

"If he isn't fast asleep—Lord! Lord!" cried Jem, gazing at the child, "who to look upon a sleeping baby, and to know what things are every day done in the world, would ever think that all men was sleeping babes once. Put it to bed, Sue; stop a minute"—and Jem tenderly kissed the child. Then turning round, and looking in the fire, he said to himself, "it *is* like little Dick."

Though late when she went to bed, Mrs. Aniseed was an early riser. She had prepared breakfast, and had fed her baby charge before her husband was stirring; and it was plain had determined

within herself to place all things in their very rosiest light before the eyes of her helpmate. She had already conned and got by heart twenty arguments to prove the exceeding comfort—nay, the ultimate profit, the child would be to them. And with these arguments simmering in her head, she moved actively about, setting her room in order, at the same time expressing the most endearing pantomime to the infant that lay rolling before the fire. Never since the first quarter of her honeymoon had Mrs. Aniseed shewn herself in sweeter temper. Bright Jem was not slow to feel its influence. "Why, Susan, you 're as lively as May-day this morning," said he, commencing his toilette. "Where 's the little chap?"

"There he is, bless him!" cried Mrs. Aniseed, "and as much at home as if he had been born here. Well, I don't know—I never thought I could love any baby again after Dick."

"Pooh! women can love no end o' babies," said Jem. "They 're made a purpose for it." Jem seated himself to breakfast, yet ere he began, recreated himself by tickling the child at his foot with his forefinger, to the mutual delectation of baby and man; whilst Mrs. Aniseed, pausing in a half-cut slice of bread and butter, looked over the table, quite delighted with the sport. How she laughed, and how frequently she assured Jem that she always said he was the best nurse in the world! She then remained solely attentive to the duties of the table, until Jem having achieved his morning bacon, turned himself round, and with his elbows upon his knees, looked thoughtfully down upon the child.

"Well, that 's a better place than a door-step, any how," said Jem, as the baby kicked before the fire.

"Yet that 's what it must come to again, Jem, if we 're hard-hearted enough to turn it out."

"Humph! It 's a shame they should be born, Sue; a downright shame," said Jem mournfully.

"La! how can the man talk such wickedness?"

"I always think so, when I see 'em running about—poor dirty creturs—as if they 'd been spawned in gutter-mud."

"With nobody to teach 'em nothing!"

"Oh, yes; they all of 'em go to school, such as it is," cried Jem bitterly.

"I 'm sure, Jem, they don't," said his wife. "There ar'n't schools enough for 'em; and then again how many of their parents don't care whether they know no more than headstrong pigs?"

"Oh, yes; they all listen to a schoolmaster. I 've seen him talking among 'em under gateways, and in corners, and in courts,

and afore shop-windows, and in all sorts o' places in the streets; yes, a schoolmaster teaching little things—and how they do learn, to be sure—no taller than that;" and here Jem, with impressive action, held up a wire toasting-fork.

"I never heard of him in the parish," said Mrs. Aniseed; "what schoolmaster do you mean?"

"The devil, Susan, the devil: I 've seen him among the children, horns, tail, and all—ha! quite as nat'ral as he 's shown in any pantomime—I 've seen him as plain as I see you; and whilst he 's been teaching 'em, I 've seen beside him Jack Ketch a grinnin', and a rubbin' his hands, and a smackin' his mouth like a fellow as sees a hearty meal, and wants to fall to. I say it, Susan, and I 'll stand to it—it 's a shame they 're born."

"Won't it be a blessed thing to snatch this darling cretur—if it doesn't look sensible as though it knew what we was talkin' of—this pretty cretur from all such trouble, all such wickedness?" asked Mrs. Aniseed, moving closer to her husband.

"Why, there was little Tom Jumper"—mused Jem—"and pretty Jack Needles—and that sarey little chap, but no real harm in him at first, Bob Winkin—didn't you and me know 'em all? And wasn't they all ruined afore they knew what ruin was? Where are they now? Why, ask Newgate—ask Newgate," said Jem, moodily. "And that 's what they 'll do with you, my little codger"—and Jem nodded to the infant,—"that 's what they 'll do with you. I can see it—though it 's a good many years off yet—I can see the rope about your little neck as sure—"

"Lx, Jem!" screamed Mrs. Aniseed; and she instantly seized the baby in her arms, and hugged it to her breast, as though to protect it from impending peril.

"Why, what an old fool you are!" said Jem, wanly smiling at his wife.

"Well, you shouldn't talk in that way," answered Mrs. Aniseed, "it 's tempting Providence. If you 're such a fortune-teller, and can see so much, it 's a bound duty upon you, Jem, to prevent it." Jem was silent: therefore his wife—true to her sex—talked on: "You ought to go down upon your knees, and bless yourself that you can make this darling lamb your own, and save it."

Jem was silent a minute; and then spoke somewhat briskly on the inspiration of a new thought. "It 's all very well about lambs, my dear; but how do we know they 'll let us have it? How do we know that its mother—"

"It hasn't no mother, Jem. I slipt out afore you woke, and I run down to the watch-house, and its mother died in the night, Jem; I thought she couldn't live. It 's a hard thing to say, but it 's no loss to the child; she 's gone, and I won't say nothing

about her; but them as know her give her shocking words. So here 's the child, Jem, a begging of you, with all its little might" —and here the woman put the baby's hands together—"to take it, and to do all you can for it, and to be sure that our little, under such a blessing, will never grow less; and here it is—isn't it like our dear Dick, Jem?—here it is, a praying you to take pity on it, and love it, and be a father to it. And you will, Jem?—you will?" cried the woman, the tears coming into her eyes, as she held the infant towards her husband.

Now Bright Jem was in face and figure as uncomely a lump of humanity as is ordinarily met with in any one day's travel. His flat broad face was the colour of ancient parchment, thinly sprinkled with deep pock-marks. His mouth was capacious as a horse-shoe. Short brush-bristles thatched his head; and his eye-brows, clubbing together, could not have mustered fifty hairs between them. His small, deep-set black eyes—truly black, for there seemed no white to them—were the lamps that lighted up with quick and various expression this most difficult countenance; and, in the present instance, did certainly appear as though they twinkled with a fire, direct from the heart. Jem was an ugly man. He knew it. This truth had been so frequently, so earnestly, so plainly impressed upon him, that—slow as most men are in such belief—he could not but believe it. More: we believe that he was quite contented with the creed. There are times, however, when ugliness may steal a look—a tint from beauty. We believe that no woman, for instance—if she marry for love—let her be ugly as Sibyl, looks altogether ugly on her wedding-day. How it is done, whence it comes, we have not the philosophy to fathom; but sure we are that the spirit of beauty does sometimes irradiate the features of deformity, melting and moulding them into momentary comeliness,—and most sure we are, that the said spirit did with its best doing, shine in the countenance of Jem, as his wife pressed the orphan child upon him.

"You 'll love it, and be a father to it?" again cried Mrs. Aniseed.

"If I don't," cried Jem. "I 'm—" but the wife stopped whatever word was coming, by putting the child's face to Jem's mouth; and he took the creature in his arms, and hugged it fondly, nay, vigorously.

And now is young St. Giles snatched from the lowest round of the ladder—(can it be Jacob's ladder that, resting on the mud of a cellar, is still to lead to heaven?)—Now is he caught from direst destitution; from the teaching of hypocrisy, and craft, and crime, to have about him comforts—though small comforts it is true; to be no longer shown, the image of poverty—a thing of human flesh

and blood to extort halfpence upon? Is he really to be promoted from the foul, dark vault of a loathsome lane—savage beasts have sweeter sleeping-places—to the wholesomeness, the light, the airiness, the respectability of a three-pair front, in Short's Gardens? To that very three-pair front which Kitty Muggs, of St. James's-square, looks down upon from her scullery with all the loftiness of contempt? Yes, it is true: St. Giles will be promoted. On the dunghill of poverty, how great the distinction between the layers of straw: what a world of difference between base, half-way, and summit! There is an aristocracy of rags, as there is an aristocracy of stars and garters.

Alas! for only one minute is young St. Giles housed in his new home—for only one minute is he the adopted babe of James and Susan Aniseed, when he is called back to act his unconscious part of mendicant, when he is reclaimed, carried away in bondage, the born slave of penury and wrong. It is even so.

Before Jem had ceased caressing the child, he heard an unusual hubbub on the staircase; another instant, and his door was flung open, and a wretched, ragged woman—worn, thin, and ghastly—staggered into the room, followed by other women. "My babe—my own babe!" cried the first woman, and was falling in a heap upon the floor, when Jem rapidly placing the child in his wife's arms, caught the intruder. Aroused, excited beyond her strength, she pointed to the child, tried to speak, and then fainted.

The cause of this interruption was soon made known to Jem. "The dear soul had come after her child."

"Her child!" cried Mrs. Aniseed. "She's not the child's mother, and she sha'n't have it. I saw the mother last night—saw her froze to death—at least she died soon afterwards."

"Why, you see," said an old crone, "this is how it is. The dear woman there, that's the darling's mother, was sick of a fever—the Lord help us, she's sick now, and so is half the lane. Well, you see, being so sick, she couldn't go out herself not by any means. Well, and so she lends the child to Peggy Flit; and when Peg never came back at all, the poor cretur that's there, went well nigh mad. And this morning, we found at the watch-house that Peg was dead, and that you had got the babe; and you see we've come for it, and that's all," said the harridan with diplomatic precision.

"But if she's the mother," asked Mrs. Aniseed, "for what should she lend the child?"

"For what should she lend the child!" crowed the old woman, looking very contemptuously at her catechist—"for what should she lend,—why in the name of blessed heaven for what else, if not to go a begging with it?"

In fine—for why should we protract the scene?—young St. Giles, the unconscious baby beggar, was borne back in triumph to Hampshire Hog Lane.

CHAPTER III.

It would be tedious work for the reader, did we chronicle every event of the long life of little St. Giles from the hour that he was snatched from Short's Gardens, until time beheld him in the mature manhood of seven years old. A long life in sooth, that six years and a half; for how much had St. Giles accomplished in it! What a stride had he made in existence, passing over childish days—childish ignorance; exempt, by fortune of his birth, from all the puerilities, the laughing thoughtlessness of babyhood. He was now a suckling, and now a dwarfed man. There was no dallying pause, no middle space for him, to play with life, knowing not his playmate—no bit of green sward, with flowers for toys. Oh, no! he was made, with sudden violence, to know life. He saw not the lovely thing life, through golden shadows, roseate hues; he looked not at it through the swimming eyes of childhood; a glorious thing to be approached through what seem beauties numberless, that gradually fade and fade as we advance upon the green uplands of time, unveiling to us by degrees the cold, hard, naked truth—the iron image, life. St. Giles had no such preparation. Suddenly, and with the merciless strength of want, he was made to look on life in its fiercest, foulest aspect. He saw at once the grim idol he had to serve, and all unconsciously, he served it. Unconsciously, too, he carried in his look, his air, his speech, a premature wisdom. He had learned, as at once, his whole task; but the suddenness of the teaching had wiped out childhood from his face: he had paid at one sum, although he knew it not, the price of life, for life's worst knowledge.

How very differently did young St. James con his lesson, life! In reality, only six months younger than his squalid brother—for in this story St. Giles and St. James must fraternise—he was still the veriest babe. Why, it was gladness to the heart to look at him—to hear his blithe voice—to see him, in that happy freedom of infancy, when children play in the vestibule of life—as children sometimes play with flowers picked from graves in a church-porch; heedless whence they pluck their pleasures, thoughtless of the mystery of mysteries taught within. And what prophecies—with

what "sweet breath composed"—were uttered to his glorification! What a man he would make! What a blessing he would prove to his begetters! What a treasure to the world at large! And so, young St. James, fed with the sweetest and the best, clothed with the softest and the richest—fondled, kissed, caressed—was, in truth, a glorious creature. There was happiness, delicate beauty, in his soft pink and white cheek—innocence, intelligence, in his large, laughing eyes. All he knew of the world was, that it was one large play-place filled with many-sorted toys; with battledores, humming-tops, and rocking-horses. Compared with young St. Giles, how very ignorant!

In something more than the six years elapsed since our last chapter, St. Giles had made more profitable use of time. But then he had had the sharpest teachers—and so many opportunities! Hunger and cold were his tutors, and rapid and many are the degrees of human knowledge conferred by them, albeit their scholars are not prone to brag of their learning. Young St. James was bounded by the garden, or the parks; or when he saw and heard the hurry and roar of London, he took his imperfect lessons through a carriage-window. Now, St. Giles—the matured, seven years' adult—was a busy merchant on the great mart of men. Every day he carried some new lie to market, played some new part, in obedience to the fiend in his bowels, that once a day at least cried, "Eat, eat." And sometimes, too, the fiend would vary his cry, and after long grumbling, long suffering, too, would mutter, "Steal, steal." And what was there in the word to appal St. Giles? Nothing; he had heard it so early: it was to him an old familiar sound—a household syllable. True it is, he had heard that it was wrong to steal: he had heard many other things, too, that were wrong; many that were right. But somehow they were jumbled in that little active brain of his. He could not separate them. He supposed there were some people whose business in the world it was to steal; just as there were some people born to fine houses and fine clothes,—whilst some were only born to cellars and rags. And so, wicked St. Giles would pilfer—such is human iniquity—with no more conscience than a magpie.

With this preface, touching the advanced years and various accomplishments of our heroes, let us now take up our broken narrative.

One of the seven airiest and finest streets that compose the Seven Dials—for we care not to name the exact spot—boasted the advent of a tradesman, who employed the whole vigour of his mind, and he himself thought not meanly of its power, on the manufacture of muffins. At the time of our present chapter, Mr. Capstick

had only lived a twelvemonth under the protection of St. Giles; paying the Saint due parish rates for such advantage. Where Mr. Capstick came from, nobody knew. It was plain, he was one of those people who now and then drop from the sky into a neighbourhood, for no other end than to adorn and dignify it. Any way, it was plain that Mr. Capstick thought as much; and he was not a man to disguise his thoughts when they at all tended to his self-glorification. True it was, muffins had been known in St. Giles's, ere Mr. Capstick lighted his oven there. But what muffins! How, too, were they made—where vended? Why, as Mr. Capstick would observe, they were made as if they were bad halfpence—and they were quite as hard to chew—in guilt and darkness. Nobody knew what they were eating. Now, all the world might see him make *his* muffins. Indeed, he would feel obliged to the world if it would take that trouble. To be sure, he was throwing his muffins to swine—but he couldn't help that. It wasn't his nature to do anything that wasn't first rate: he knew he was a loser by it; all men who did so were; nevertheless, a man who was a true man would go on ruining himself for the world, though he might hate the world all the time he was doing it. His muffins were open to the universe. There was no mystery in him, none at all. And then he would say, glowing at times with a strange eloquence, "What a glorious thing it would be for the world, if every man made his muffin—whatever that muffin might be—in the open light of heaven; and not in a cupboard, a hole, a corner! It was making muffins in secret, and in darkness, that made three parts of the misery of mankind." When people heard Mr. Capstick discourse after this fashion, they would confidentially declare to one another, that it was plain he was born above his business: he was a broken-down gentleman; perhaps come of a Jacobite family, and made muffins to hide his disgrace. True it was, there was a pompousness, a swagger, an affected contempt of the people with whom he turned the penny, that gave some warranty for these opinions. Notwithstanding, Mr. Capstick, with all his consequence, all his misanthropy,—and he wore his hatred of mankind as he would have worn a diamond ring, a thing at once to be put in the best light and to be very proud of—was a great favourite. The cellars of St. Giles's echoed his praises. He was, in his way, a great benefactor to his poorest neighbours. "You see, Mary Anne," he would say to his wife, "what a blessing there is in corn. When muffins are too stale to sell, they 're always good enough to give away." And these remainder muffins he would frequently bestow upon the veriest needy, accompanied with phrases that spoke his contempt of human nature, his own particular nature included.

Such was Mr. Capstick—such was the self-important muffin-maker—whom we have now to introduce to the reader. The time was about two o'clock on a gusty March afternoon; and Mr. Capstick stood erect behind his counter, evidently strung for some important task. There was a weight of meaning in his broad, white face; and a big black cap, selected it would seem with an eye to the picturesque, impending over his brow, imparted to it a severity not to be lost upon vulgar beholders. Having thrust his hands and half his arms into his breeches pockets—as though to place himself firmly on his centre—the muffin-maker proceeded to interrogate a child before him, speaking very loud, and frowning very significantly the while. The child, reader, was young St. Giles. You left him when he was a nursling; and the boy man stands before you. He is puny and dwarfed; a miserable little chit in his anatomy; but his sharp, fox-like face—his small black eyes, now looking bashfulness, and now brightening with impudence—his voice, now coaxing, and now drawling—prove him to be an almost equal match for his burly questioner, the clever, pompous, world-knowing muffin-maker.

"So; you are the little dog that came begging of me in Bow-street?" growled Capstick.

"I 'm the werry dog, sir," answered St. Giles, in no way daunted by Capstick's thunder.

"Don't you know that boys oughtn't to beg? Don't you know that I could have sent you to gaol for begging? Eh? Don't you know that?" asked the magnificent muffin-maker very loudly.

"Yes, sir; I knows it, sir," replied the child, with a wonderful knowledge of law.

"And if you know better, why don't you do better?" said Capstick.

"Don't know what better is, sir," returned St. Giles, looking down at the floor, and shuffling his feet.

"Humph!" mused Capstick, and then he somewhat gently asked, "should you like to learn it, my little boy?"

"Isn't it werry hard, sir?" inquired St. Giles. "Don't like hard learning, sir."

"What, you've tried, have you? You have been to school, eh? You can write a little, St. Giles, and read a little?" said the muffin-maker.

"No, sir; never went to school; never had time, sir. Besides, sir, father always used to say, school was so werry dummy."

"Dummy! What's dummy?" cried the muffin-maker.

Young St. Giles leered up in Capstick's face, and then giving himself a twist, as though enjoying the tradesman's ignorance.

said—"Not know what dummy is! Why, sir, if you please, dummy 's *flash*."

"Oh! then you know *flash?*" asked Capstick.

"I know a little, sir," replied St. Giles, very modestly: "know more, when I grows bigger."

"I dare say you will," cried the muffin-maker, pityingly, "And tell me, what 's your father doing now?"

"He 's a doing nothing now, sir."

"No!" said Capstick.

"No, sir,—he 's dead," said St. Giles; but whether in simplicity or jest, the muffin-maker did not discover.

"And you 've never been taught to do anything? Poor little wretch!" cried Capstick.

It was plain that young St. Giles rejected the compassion of the muffin-maker; for he immediately, with much volubility, asserted: "I knows a good many things, sir; sometimes, sir, goes singing o' ballads with Tom Blast: was to have gone with him to-day; only Tom 's so precious hoarse, crying dying speeches yesterday. Then I knows how to sell matches, and hold osses, and do a many things, sir, as I forget now."

Capstick looked at the urchin for a few moments, then leaning over the counter, and beckoning St. Giles closer, he said to him, in a tone of tenderness,—"You 'd like to be a good boy, wouldn't you?"

"A course, sir," answered St. Giles, with stolid face.

"And so be a good man; and so at last get a nice shop, such as this, eh? You 'd like it, eh?"

"Wouldn't I though!" cried St. Giles, playing with his hair and grinning.

"Instead of wandering about the streets—and singing ballads—and going along with boys, that at last may lead you to be hanged?"

"I saw Bill Filster hung, yesterday," cried St. Giles sharply, and his eyes sparkled as with the recollection of the treat.

"Oh Lord! oh Lord!" groaned the muffin-maker. "You little rascal! who took you?"

"Went with some big boys," answered the unabashed St. Giles. "I give Phil Slant a happle to let me set upon his shoulders. Bill Filster used to live in our lane. Poor Bill! It was so prime."

The muffin-maker spasmodically whipped his cap from his head, and drawing a long breath, wiped his brows; the while he looked at young St. Giles with pity, and something like bitterness. The next moment he cried to himself, "Poor little wretch! Poor little animal!"

"I know'd Bill Filster. Once he lived in our lane, Oh, couldn't he sing a song! He teached me one about Dick Turpin. Sometimes," said St. Giles, bending his small quick eyes on Capstick, "sometimes people have given me a penny to sing it."

The muffin-maker made no reply; but with a lofty waving of the hand—immediately understood by St. Giles—commanded silence. Then did Mr. Capstick walk up and down behind his counter, self-communing. Fix his flying thoughts in words, and they would read somewhat as follow:—"A little scoundrel! Poor wretch, how can he help it? What 's he been taught? Wrong, wrong; nothing but wrong. There 's a manner in the little villain, too, that promises something better. He 's but a babe! Poor miserable thing! and what a knowing little rascal! Well, it won't ruin me—thank God!—it can't ruin me." And then Mr. Capstick again laid himself across the counter, and said a little sternly to young St. Giles—"Come here, you sir."

"Yes, sir," said St. Giles, stepping up to the muffin-maker, and looking confidently in the face of his patron.

"If I was to be your friend, and try to save you from being hanged—there, don't cry"—for St. Giles affecting sensibility had already raised his arm to his eyes—"If I was to save you from being hanged, for else you 're pretty sure to come to it, would you be a good boy, eh?"

"Oh, wouldn't I, sir!" cried St. Giles. "I jest would then."

"Well—do you think you could sell muffins?" And this question Mr. Capstick put in a low, cautious voice, with his eye turned watchfully towards the back parlour, as though he feared some sudden detection.

"I should like it so!" cried young St. Giles, rubbing his hands.

Capstick was evidently taken with the boy's alacrity for the profession, for he quickly said—"Then I 'll make a man of you. Yes: I 'll set you up in business." With these words Capstick produced a small basket from behind the counter. "Be a good boy, now," he said, "an honest boy, and this basket may some day or the other grow into a big shop. Understand; you can understand, I know, for you 've a lot of brains of some sort in your eyes, I can see. Understand, that if you 're civil and painstaking, your fortune 's made. This is the best chance you ever had of being a man. Here 's a basket and a bell,"—for in the days we write of, the muffin-bell was not unmusical to legislative ears—"and two dozen muffins. You 'll get two shillings for 'em, for they 're baker's dozens. Then come here to-morrow; I 'll set you up again, and give you a lumping profit for yourself. There 's the goods;" and Capstick, with exceeding gravity, placed the basket in one hand of St. Giles, and a small metal bell

in the other. "Tell me, my boy, did you ever see Lord Mayor's show?"

"Yes, sir; many times," said the seven-year-old St. Giles.

"And the Lord Mayor in his gold coach, and the trumpeters before him, and all that? Now, attend to me"—and the muffin-maker became still more grave. "Attend to me. There's many a Lord Mayor who never had the start you have—who never was so lucky to begin life upon muffins. So, when bad boys come about you, and want you to idle and play with 'em, and do worse than that it may be—just think of the Lord Mayor, and what you *may* come to."

"Yes, sir, I will, sir," said young St. Giles, impatient to begin business.

"Then go along with you," cried Capstick; "and mind people don't call me a fool for trusting you. There, go," said the tradesman, a little pompously—"cry muffins, and be happy!"

St. Giles jumped from the step into the street, and rang his bell, and chirped "muffins" with the energy of a young enthusiast. Capstick, with complacency upon his face, looked for a time after the child; he then muttered—"Well, if it saves the little wretch, it's a cheap penn'orth."

"At your old doings again!" cried Mrs. Capstick, who from the dark nook of a back parlour had watched, what she often called the weakness of her husband.

"My dear Mary Anne," chuckled Mr. Capstick, as though laughing at a good joke—"'tis the little rascal that, I told you, set upon me in Bow-street. I've given him a few of the stale ones—he's rogue enough to pass 'em off I know. Ha! ha! I like to see the villany of life—it does me good. After, as you know, what life's done for me, it's meat and drink to me to see crops of little vagabonds coming up about us like mustard-seed—all of 'em growing up to cheat and rob, and serve the world as it should be served; for it's a bad world—base and brassy as a bad shilling." And with this ostentatious, counterfeit misanthropy, would the muffin-maker award to his best deeds the worst motives. And Mrs. Capstick was a shrewd woman. She suffered herself to seem convinced of her husband's malice of heart,—knowing as she did its thorough excellence. But then the muffin-maker had been bitterly used by the world. "His wine of life," he would say, "had been turned into vinegar."

"Well, you'll be ruined your own way," cried Mrs. Capstick.

"And that, Mary Anne," said the muffin-maker, "is some comfort in ruin. When so many people would ruin us, it's what I call a triumph over the villany of the world to be ruined after one's own pattern."

"Good afternoon, ma'am—why, you 're welcome as the flowers in spring," said Mrs. Capstick to a woman flauntily dressed, and burning in red ribands, who suddenly entered the shop; a woman, whose appearance did scarcely suggest the beauty and tenderness of spring flowers. "I haven't seen you these three months."

"Oh lor no!" said the woman, "that court will be the death of all of us."

Let not the reader imagine that Kitty Muggs complained of the tainted air or confined limits of any court in the neighbourhood. No, indeed; she spoke of no other court than the Court of St. James.

"What! Queen Charlotte will so often make you take tea with her, eh?" said the muffin-man, with his severest sneer. "It 's too bad; she oughtn't to be so hard upon you."

"Oh, there 's so much dining and dining—cabinet dinners, my dear, they call 'em—for they always eat most when they 've most to do,—that I might as well be in the galleys. However, they 're all going to the play to-night, and—it 's a poor heart that never rejoices—I 'm going there myself."

"Well, I don't know that you could do a better thing," said Capstick; "there 's a good deal to be learnt at a play, if fools will learn anything."

"Oh! a fiddle's end upon learning. I go for a nice deep tragedy; something cutting, that will do me good. There 's nothing so refreshing as a good cry, when, my dear, you know after all there 's nothing to cry about. Tears was given us to enjoy ourselves with—that is, tears at the play-house."

"They wash out the mind, like a dirty tea-cup," said the muffin-maker, "and give a polish to the feelings."

"They always do with me, Mister Capstick," said the woman. "I never feel so tender and so kind to all the world as when I 've had a good cry; and, thank Heaven! a very little makes me cry. What we women should do, if we couldn't cry, my dear, nobody knows. We 're treated bad enough as it is, but if we couldn't cry when we liked, how we should be put upon—what poor, defenceless creturs we should be!"

"Nature 's been very kind to you," said the muffin-maker. "Next to the rhinoceros, there 's nothing in the world armed like a woman. And she knows it."

"I 'm not talking of brute beasts, Mister Capstick," said the fair one, tossing her head; and then approaching the shop-door, she looked intently down the street.

Mrs. Capstick, to change the conversation, carelessly observed —"You are not looking for anybody, Kitty?"

"For nobody in particlar," said Kitty, and she again gazed

very anxiously. "The truth is, one of our gentlemen is going to the play with me. We didn't leave the house together, for you know what foolishness people talk. I told him to meet me here. I'm going to buy some muffins," she quickly added, as a justifiable trading excuse for the liberty she had taken.

"Never mind the muffins," said Capstick; "if I can help you to a husband in any lawful way, Kitty, why I owe the world such a grudge, I'll do anything to do it."

Kitty, in her maiden confusion, unconscious of the muffin maker's satire, merely said, "Lor! Mr. Capstick."

"What sort of a gentleman is he?" asked Mrs. Capstick.

"There, again," said the muffin-maker, "if it is n't droll! There can't be a woman ever so old, that, when she thinks she smells a sweet-heart somewhere, does n't snigger and grin as if her own courting days were come again. Well, you are a strange lot, you women!"

"What sort of a gentleman is he, Kitty?" repeated the unmoved Mrs. Capstick.

Kitty smiled very forcibly, and answered, "Oh, a—a dark gentleman. And now, Mrs. Capstick, let me have a shilling's-worth of muffins. Dear me! Why don't you come and live in Pell Mell? Muffins is the only things that we haven't tip-top at the West-end. You 're burying yourself here, in St. Giles's; you are, indeed. If you 'd only come West-end—only do n't let it be known where you come from—I could put your muffins, as I may say, into millions of families."

"It 's worth thinking of," said the sly Capstick. "I might be appointed muffin-maker to the Royal Family. Might put up the Royal Arms, with a gold toasting-fork in the lion's mouth."

"To be sure you might," said the sanguine Kitty; "and if you 've a mind to do it, I 'll speak to the cook—he 's the best of friends with the butler—the butler will speak to the valet—the valet will speak to master—and master 's only got to catch the king in a good humour to do anything with him. I tell you what do," said Kitty, as struck by a brilliant thought: "send in a couple of dozen muffins to-morrow, and I 'll manage to introduce 'em."

"And you think his gracious Majesty 's to be got at in this way, through the kitchen?" asked Capstick.

"I 'm certain sure of it; it 's done every day; or what 's the good of having a master in what they call a cabinet? There 's nothing like working up 'ards, Mr. Capstick—I know what the court is. I 'd have done a good deal for Jem—they call him Bright Jem, but I could never see his brightness—only he 's as proud as a peacock with a Sunday tail. I could have got him

—ah! I don 't know what I couldn't have got him—only he 'd never let me ask for it. Ha! if my foolish sister hadn't married, as I may say, in the gutter, she might have been quite as well off as me."

"She seems very happy, for all that," said Mrs. Capstick.

"Poor thing! she doesn't know no better," said Kitty; "she oughtn't to be happy though. I 'm going to tea with her, and to take them muffins; for though she has married a low tradesman, I can't forget she 's my sister; and yet you should hear how I do get laughed at about it, sometimes in our house. But feelings is feelings, Mr. Capstick. Oh!" added Kitty with much vivacity, and an affected flutter—"here comes the gentleman. Now, think of what I 've said, Mr. Capstick; there 's the shilling." And Kitty, taking the muffins, turned out of the shop, meeting a black footman—black as guilt—as he was about to enter. "Here I am, Cesar," said Kitty; and taking an ebony arm, she walked with him away.

"Why, bless me! She 's never going to marry a nigger!" cried the muffin-maker's wife. "She 'll never do such a thing! Eh, Mr. Capstick?"

"Why, Mary Anne," said the misanthrope, "Miss Kitty is a long way the other side of a chicken. And when women of her time of life can't snow white, they 'll snow black."

CHAPTER IV.

We must again solicit the company of the reader to the lodging of Bright Jem, Short's Gardens. It is the same clean, dull room, as shown in our second chapter: one of the many nooks in which the care and industry of woman do somehow make poverty and snugness half friends; in which penury has at least the cheerful hue of cleanliness. Bright Jem again smoked at the fire-place. Though more than six years had passed, they had run off his face like oil. Here and there his stubbly hair was dredged with grey; his broad back was bent a little, nothing more. Indeed, Jem's was one of those faces, in which time seems at once to do its best and worst. It grew a little browner with years like walnut-wood; but that was all.

We cannot say—and in truth it is a ticklish question to ask of those who are best qualified to give an answer—if there really be not a comfort in substantial ugliness: in ugliness that, unchanged, will last a man his life; a good granite face in which there shall

be no wear and tear. A man so appointed, is saved many alarms, many spasms of pride. Time cannot wound his vanity through his features; he eats, drinks, and is merry, in despite of mirrors. No acquaintance starts at sudden alteration, hinting in such surprise, decay and the final tomb. He grows older with no former intimates—churchyard voices!—crying, "How you 're altered!" How many a man might have been a truer husband, a better father, firmer friend, more valuable citizen, had he, when arrived at legal maturity, cut off—say, an inch of his nose. This inch—only an inch!—would have destroyed the vanity of the very handsomest face; and so, driven the thoughts of a man from a vulgar looking-glass, a piece of shop crystal,—and more, from the fatal mirrors carried in the heads of women to reflect, heaven knows how many coxcombs who choose to stare into them,—driven the man to the glass of his own mind. With such small sacrifice, he might have been a philosopher. Thus considered, how many a coxcomb may be within an inch of a sage! True, there was an age when wise men—at least a few of them—glorified in self-mutilation, casting sanguinary offerings to the bird of wisdom. But this was in the freshness and youth of the world; in the sweet innocence of early time. But the world grows old; and like a faded, fashionable beauty, the older it grows the more it lays on the paint.

And the sum and end of this swelling paragraph is this. If, O reader! you are young and believe yourself handsome, avoid the peril of beauty. Think of Narcissus, and—cut off your nose. Only an inch! And now let us descend to the hearth and home of Bright Jem.

Mrs. Aniseed still shone, in comfortable looks, at the fire-side. Her face was a little thinner, a little longer; but time had touched her as though, for the good heart that was in her bosom, he loved her.

A third person—a visitor—was present: a woman of any age. Her face seemed bloodless—white as chalk—formed in sharp outline. She was poorly drest,—and yet it was plain she aimed at a certain flow and amplitude of costume that should redeem her from among the vulgar. Her head was armed with a white stiff muslin cap, frilled and pointed: it seemed a part of her; a thing growing upon her, like the crest of some strange bird. She sat motionless, with her arms crossed, like an old figure in faded tapestry. Poor soul! she seemed one of the remnants of another age, that Time, as he clears away generations, forgets now and then to gather up: or it may be, purposely leaves them for a while as century posts of a past age. Miss Canary—such was her name—was very poor; nevertheless, she had one sustaining comfort,

which—as though it were a cordial—she took to her heart twenty times a day. It was this: "She was born a lady; nobody could deprive her of that." And it was this proud thought that, like an armed knight, attended her in the gallery of Covent Garden Theatre, where, condescending to poverty, she every evening offered for sale apples and oranges, cider, and a bill of the play. It was this thought of her born gentility that kept her taciturn and stately amidst the free comments of apprentices, the wit of footmen, and the giggling of holiday maids. The dignity of her utterance, her stately bearing, had some years past obtained for her the name of Lady Canary. And she deserved it. For she offered apples, oranges, cider, and a bill of the play, as though she really invited the gods to the fruit of the Hesperides, to the very choicest sort of nectar, and a new poem by Apollo. There was no solicitation in her tone,—but a sort of disciplined condescension; and she took the money for her commodities with nothing of the air of a trader, but of a tax-gatherer; or rather of a queen receiving homage in the tangible form of halfpence. And all this she owed to the constant thought that glorified her far beyond the heroines upon the stage—(empresses for a night),—to the possessing idea that "she was born a lady; and nobody could deprive her of that." It was this family pride—from what family she rose and declined she never told—that now engaged her in, we fear, an unequal controversy with Bright Jem; his wife, oddly enough, taking no part in the debate, but sitting at the fire, now smiling and now nodding commendation of either deserving party.

"No, Mr. James, no, I tell you, I was born a lady, and I couldn't do it," said Miss Canary. "You are a very good man, a very kind creature, Mr. Aniseed; but excuse me, you don't know what high life 's made of."

"Not all made o' sugar, I dare say," said Jem, "no more than our life 's all made o' mud."

"But I ought to know; for I tell you again, I was born a lady," cried the playhouse Pomona.

"Nonsense," said Jem. "I tell you, Miss Canary, there isn't sich a thing as a born lady in the world."

"Why! you never, Mr. James!" and Miss Canary was scandalised at the heresy.

"Born lady!" repeated Jem, laughingly; and then moving his chair towards his disputant, he touched her mittened arm with his pipe, saying—"Look here, now. There 's Mrs. Grimbles, at number five, she had a little gal last week,—you know that? Well; Mrs Grimbles is a clear-starcher. That you allow? And for that reason—now tell me this,—for that reason is her little

baby born a clear-starcher? Eh? I should like to know as much as that now?"

"Oh, Mr. James! you 're a good person,—but you know you 're a low man; no, no; you can't understand these things." And Miss Canary smiled a pitying smile.

"I tell you," said Jem, "there 's no such thing as born ladies and gentlemen. There 's little bits of red girls and boys born if you will,—and you may turn 'em into—now, look here," said Jem, "if there was to be some folks born gentlemen and some not,—why wasn't there two Adams and two Eves, for the high people and the low ones?"

"Oh, Mr. James!" cried Miss Canary, half rising from her seat—"For your precious soul's sake, I hope not; but I *do* think you 're an *athist*."

"I can't tell, I 'm sure," said Jem, not comprehending the conveyed reproach. "I don't know; but as for my soul, Miss Canary,—why, I try to keep it as clean and take as good care of it as a soldier takes care of his gun, so that it may be always in fighting order against the enemy."

"You think so, Mr. James; but with your notions, it 's impossible. Oh, Mrs. Aniseed, I do wonder at you! How you can hear your good man talk as he does, and still sit laughing in that way! Ha, I bless my stars, I 've not a husband to be miserable about."

"Well, I 'm sure, Miss Canary, I wish you had," said Mrs. Aniseed, laughing the more. "If you was only as miserable as I am, what a deal happier you 'd be! People who live alone with nobody but a cat,—I don't know how it is, but they do get a little like their company."

"Susan," said Jem; and taking the pipe from his mouth, he looked full at his wife, and shook his head reprovingly. "I won't have it, Susan."

"La, Jem! Mayn't I speak in my own house?" cried the wife.

"It 's the very last place you ought to speak in, Susan, if you can't speak nothing that 's comfortable. If you and Miss Canary want a good bout together, why, I hope I know women too well to be unreasonable. 'Point a place and take an early hour that you may get it over in one day, and not at your own fireside, where you ask a body to come and sit down cosily with you. It 's a mean advantage. A wild Injun wouldn't do it."

"I 'm sure, Jem, I meant nothing," said Mrs. Aniseed.

"That 's it, Susan; that 's the shame and nonsense o' the thing. A man might bear a good deal of noise from you women—I don't mean you, Miss Canary—if there was half-an-ounce of meaning

in it. But when you get upon an argiment one with another, you go at it like a monkey on a drum. It 's all a row without a bit of tune in it. And then, nine times out o' ten, after you 've been spitting and clawing at one another, you make it up you don't know why, and all of a sudden you 're sociable together as two kittens at the same sarcer of milk. And now, Susan, my old woman, get the tea."

Mrs. Aniseed, with a sudden smile on her face, called there by the kindly tone of the conjugal mandate, said, "You 're a queer cretur, Jem," and was about to quit the room. She paused a moment at the door, and nodding significantly to Jem, said, "Muffins," and then vanished.

We know not whether the word reached Miss Canary, but she observed, with new cordiality,—"She 's a dear woman, Mr. James; and now she can't hear me, I don't mind saying it—I love her like any sister."

Bright Jem said nothing, but sucked his pipe with a loud smack.

"Nothing 's a trouble to her. She 's done many things for me, that I couldn't have done myself; but then, as I say, Mr. James, I was born a lady, and though I do sell fruit in the playhouse, thank heaven! I never forget myself."

"Not when your cat 's a starving?" said Jem, drily.

"Now, we won't talk of that again, Mr. James. We 've talked enough about that. You may say it 's weakness—I call it a proper pride. I don't mind going with a pie to the bakehouse—don't much mind answering the milk—but I can't quite forget what I came of—no, nothing on earth should compel me to take in the cat's-meat. Pride must stop somewhere; and till my dying day, I stop at cat's-meat."

"Well, I 'm very glad, Miss Canary, I 'm not your mouser — that 's all," said Jem; who was interrupted in further speech by the sudden appearance of his wife, who, somewhat flustered, yet with laughter playing about her mouth, bounced into the room.

"Jem," she cried, "who do you think 's coming? And who do you think"—and here she approached her husband, and was about to whisper in his ear, when Jem drew himself majestically back.

"Mrs. Aniseed," he said, somewhat sternly, "you 've no more manners than a poll parrot."

"Don't mind me," said Miss Canary rising. "I 'll go upon the landing for a minute."

"Don't stir a foot, ma'am," cried Jem, jumping up and handing her the chair; then turning to his wife—"And this is your breeding,—to whisper company out o' your room! What have you got to say?"

"Well, then, nothing but this — Kitty 's down stairs, come to tea. And she 's brought somebody with her," said Mrs. Aniseed.

"Well, poor soul! I hope it 's a sweetheart: she 's been a long while looked over, and I hope her time 's come at last Does he look like a sweetheart? You women can tell that." said Jem.

"I don't know, I 'm sure," answered Mrs. Aniseed, and she burst into a loud laugh. At the same moment, Kitty Muggs entered the room all smiles and good-humour, shaking hands with Bright Jem, and her esteemed acquaintance, Miss Canary; who, more than once, had sunk the recollection of her ladylike origin, and visited the kitchen of St. James's as an especial guest of Kitty's.

"I never saw you look so charming, Kitty—well, that bonnet does become you," said Miss Canary. "And what a sweet riband!"

"Why, Kitty, there is mischief in the wind, I 'm certain," said Jem. "You 've got somebody tight at last, I can see that. Don't pucker your mouth up as small as a weddin' ring, but tell us who it is. I 'll give you away with all my heart and soul."

"Lor, Jem! you are such a man. It 's only one of our gentlemen come with me; we 're going to the play." And then a footstep was heard on the stairs, and Kitty running to the door, cried encouragingly, "Come up, Cesar." Cesar obeyed the invitation, and in an instant stood bowing about him on the floor. Jem was twitched by a momentary surprise, but directly recovered himself. Laying down his pipe, he advanced with outstretched hand to the negro.

"You 're welcome, my friend. Anybody as Kitty Muggs brings here is welcome as she is." Jem, turning his eye, detected his wife painfully endeavouring to kill a laugh by thrusting her apron corner into her mouth. Whereupon he repeated in a tone not to be mistaken by his helpmate—"Quite welcome; as welcome as she is." Mrs. Aniseed, thus rebuked, with a great effort swallowed her mirth, and immediately busied herself at the cupboard. Cesar silently seated himself, and looked about him—keenly relishing the cordiality of his reception—with a face lustrous as blackest satin. In his great contentment, he saw not Miss Canary, who had risen from her chair, and stood still with unclosed lips and wandering eyes, evidently feeling that all her treasured gentility was quitting her for ever, drawn magnetically from her by the presence of a negro. She could not stay in the same room with a blackamoor—that was impossible. No; she was born a lady; and she would die rather than forfeit that consolation. Bewildered, yet endeavouring to make a graceful

retreat, she still remained motionless, drawn taller, as pride and death will draw people.

"There 's no need of ceremony, Miss Canary," said Jem, moving the chair to her, with an emphasis—"Come, sit down, and make your life happy." Without knowing what she did, Miss Canary dropt in the chair; and then vehemently hated herself for the docility. Nevertheless, she would not remain in the room with a negro footman. A livery was bad enough; but a livery with a black man inside it! There was no lie she would not tell to escape the degradation.

"You 're very good, Mr. James; very kind, but I 've such a headache," said Miss Canary, "I do think my head will split in two."

"Well, two heads, they say, is better than one," cried Jem, who saw at once the cause of the sudden illness.

"Got a head-ache!" exclaimed Kitty. "Where 's my salts, Cesar!" Immediately, Cesar taking a small bottle, warm from his pocket, advanced towards Miss Canary, who tried to shrink through the back of the chair, as the black approached her. "Take a good smell at 'em," said Kitty, "they 're fresh to-day; I had 'em for the play to-night. I never go without 'em, since I was taken out a fainting."

"Never mind the salts," said Mrs. Aniseed; "a cup of nice tea will do you good." And she set the tea-things on the table.

"Yes," cried Kitty, "and I 've brought you some real gunpowder, some I got from our own canister."

Kitty was about to consign the treasure to the tea-pot, when Bright Jem snatched up the vessel. "Much obliged to you Kitty, all the same, but you 'll keep your gunpowder. I don't make my bowels a place for stolen goods, I can tell you."

"Stolen goods, Mr. Aniseed," cried Kitty, "stolen, why, it was only taken." Jem, inexorable, shook his head. "Well, you are such a strange man and have such strange words for things!"

"No, Kitty," answered Jem; "it 's having the right words for things, that makes 'em seem strange to you. I 've told you this afore; now, don't you try it again."

Mrs. Aniseed, to divert this little contest, bustled about with unwonted energy! ringing the cups and saucers, and then calling out loudly for a volunteer to toast the muffins. "Permit me, marm," said Cesar, with exuberant politeness; the while Mrs. Aniseed drew back the toasting-fork, declaring she could by no manner of means "allow of such a thing."

"Let him do it; he toasts beautiful," cried Kitty; and Cesar gained his wish.

"'Scuse my back, marm," said Cesar, as, stooping to the fire, he turned his shoulders towards Miss Canary.

"Always as he is now," said Kitty in a whisper to Miss Canary, "good-tempered as any dog." And then she furtively pressed the forbidden gunpowder tea upon the spinster, assuring her that the queen didn't drink such. Reader, your indulgence for human frailty. Miss Canary, forgetful of her ladyhood, pocketed the stolen goods with the serenity of innocence.

"And so you 're a going to the play, Kitty, you and Mr. Cesar? Well, I think we shall have a good house. Of course, you go to our shop?" said Jem. "A deep tragedy to-night. All the better for you, Miss Canary, isn't it? Well, I never could make it out; that folks should suck more oranges, and drink more beer at a tragedy, than any other thing."

"It 's their feelings, Jem," said Mrs. Aniseed.

"Well, I suppose it is. Just as folks eat and drink as they do at a funeral. When the feelings are stirred up they must have something to struggle with, and so they go to eating and drinking."

"Romeo and Juliet 's always worth three shillings more to me than any other play," said Miss Canary, gradually reconciled to the black by the gunpowder. "Oranges relieve the heart."

"No doubt on it," said Jem. "Though I don't often look inside the house, still I have seen 'em in the front row of the gallery —a whole lot of full-grown women—sucking and crying, like broken-hearted babbies."

"We 're all a going to-night, Jem," said Kitty, "that is, all our people. My lord and my lady, and, for the first time in his life, the dear child. Oh, what a love of loves that babby is. But you remember him, Susan? you recollect the night he was born, don't you?"

"I should think I did," said Mrs. Aniseed. "That 's the night, you know, Jem, I brought home that blessed infant."

"Blessed infant!" groaned Jem. "Ha! he was a blessed infant. And what is he now? Why, he looks as if he had been brought up by a witch, and played with nothing but devils. A little varmint! when he sometimes comes sudden upon me, he makes me gasp again; there does seem such a deal of knowing in his looks. You might thread a needle with his head, it looks so sharp. Poor little bit of muck! Ha!" and again Jem groaned.

"Ha! the Lord knows what will become of him," cried Mrs. Aniseed.

"I know what will become of him," said Jem; "the gallows will become of him—that 's as plain as rope."

"Well, Mr. James," said Miss Canary—"and if they will—a

little more sugar, please—if they will, these little wretches, rush to destruction, what 's to be done with 'em ?"

"Rush to destruction!" cried Jem indignantly—"pushed, driven to destruction, you mean. Now, look at that little chap—see what he 's gone through. I wonder he isn't as full of wrinkles as a monkey. He wasn't above six months old when we had him. Well, they took him from us ; to be sure we 'd no right to him ; there was his own mother, and—no matter for that. They took him from us ; and for a twelvemonth after that—I 've seen him now in one woman's lap, now in another's, with his pretty plump face every week getting thinner and thinner—poor little wretch !—as though, babby as it was, it knew something of the wickedness that was going on about it, and days counted double days upon it. There looked a something horrible sensible in the child—a knowingness that was shocking, crowded as it was into its bit of a farthing face. Well, so it went on for about two years. And then, I 've seen it barefoot in the mud, and heard it screaming its little pipe like a whistle, a singing ballads. And then, when it wasn't four years old, I 've seen the child with matches in his hand ; and I 've heard him lie and beg, and change his voice up and down, and down and up—lord ! it has made my blood turn like water to hear such cunning in a little cretur that natur meant to be as innocent as heaven. Well, and now what is he ? At seven years old, what is he ? Why, that little head of his is full of wasps as July. Now and then, a sort of look comes back upon his face, as if it was a good angel looking in it, —and then, away it goes, and there 's a imp of wickedness, grinning and winking at you."

"I hope we shall be in time to get a good place," said Kitty, to whom the history of young St. Giles seemed a very low and wicked business. "I want to get in the front row, because I do want to see how that precious cretur, that dear angel, young master, likes it. Sweet fellow ! They say he 's so sensible—shouldn't wonder if he knows every bit about it to-morrow. There never was such a child as that in the world."

"What ! young St. James, eh ? Well, he ought to be a nice little chap," said Jem. "He 's lived the life of a flower ; with nothing to do, but to let himself be nursed and coddled. He hasn't had nothing to iron the dimples out of him yet. Howsomever, I shall have a look at him to-night, when I call the carriage."

A few minutes more elapsed, and then there was a general move towards the theatre. Miss Canary, having suffered a promise to be tortured from her that she would visit Kitty at the West-end, left Short's Gardens to prepare her basket in the gallery. Bright

Jem, having heartily shaken Cesar's hand—Cesar had remained silent as night during his visit, though he looked and smiled all kind of grateful eloquence—departed on his customary duty; and Kitty had then nothing to do, but to persuade her sister to accompany her and Cesar to the house. "I'll pay for you, Susan, so you needn't mind the expense," said Kitty.

"Oh, it isn't that," said Mrs. Aniseed, "not at all that, but—"

"Well, then, what can it be? Jem says you may go if you like, and I can see nothing to pervent you."

No, Kitty; you cannot see. Your eyes are lost in your heart, and you cannot see a footman of most objectionable blackness—a human blot—an ignominious stain that the prejudices of your sister, kind, cordial soul as she is, shrink from as from something dangerous to respectability. You, Kitty, cannot see this. You merely look upon Cesar Gum—the only creature of all the ten thousand thousand men, who in your pilgrimage through life, has ever proffered to you the helping of his arm, who has ever stammered, trembled, smiled at your look, and run like a hound at your voice—you merely see in him a goodness, a sympathy that you have yearned for; and, for the tint of the virtue, you see not that: to you it may be either black, red, or white. Certainly, so much has the fire of your heart absorbed the colour of your slave, that to you black Cesar Gum is fair as Ganymede. Sweet magician Love! Mighty benevolence. Cupid, that takes away stains and blots—that gives the line of beauty to zig-zag, upturned noses—that smiles, a god of enchantment, in all eyes however green, blinking, or stone-like—that gives a pouting prettiness even to a hare-lip, bending it like Love's own bow! Great juggler, Cupid, that from his wings shakes precious dust in mortal eyes; and lo! they see nor blight, nor deformity, nor stain; or see them turned to ornament; even, as it is said, the pearl of an oyster is only so much oyster disease. Plutus has been called a grand decorator. He can but gild ugliness; passing off the thing for its brightness. But Love—Love can give to it the shape, and paint it with tints of his own mother. Plutus may, after all, be only a maker of human pocket-pieces. He washes deformity with bright metal, and so puts it off upon the near-sighted; now Love is an alchemist, and will, at least to the eyes and ears of some *one*, turn the coarsest lump of clay to one piece of human gold. And it was Love that, passing his rose-tipped, baby fingers along the lids of Kitty Muggs, made her see white in black: it was Love that, to her vision, turned ebony to ivory.

"Didn't you hear Jem say you might go?" again cried the unconscious Kitty.

"Shall be most happy, assure you marm," said Cesar, clasping

his hands, and raising them entreatingly. "Take great care of you, nebber fear."

"Well, I will go," said Mrs. Aniseed, her repugnance conquered by Cesar's good temper; and in a few minutes—for Mrs. Aniseed possessed, perhaps, that highest and most valuable of all the female virtues, a virtue that Eve herself was certainly not born with, she was a quick dresser—in a few minutes the three were on their road to Covent Garden Theatre. A few minutes more, and they entered the gallery. All things portended a happy evening, for they were early enough for the front row; Mr. Cesar Gum taking his joyful seat between the ladies.

"Mind the bottle, dear," said Kitty in a low voice to Cesar, who nodded; his eyes sparkling up at the tender syllable. "Such a sweet drop of Madeary from our house, Susan; ha! ha! never mind Jem."

The gallery filled with holiday-makers and gallery wits. Miss Canary was soon hailed as an old acquaintance; every possible dignity being thrown, like roses, upon her. One apprentice begged to inquire of her, "When the Emperor of Chaney was coming over to marry her?" Another asked her, "What she'd take for her diamond ear-rings?" But beautiful was it to behold the nun-like serenity of Miss Canary. She moved among her scoffers, silent and stately, as the ghost of a departed countess. "I mind 'em no more," she observed, as in the course of her vocation she approached Mrs. Aniseed, "no more than the heads of so many door-knockers." Cesar mutely acquiesced in this wisdom; and in an evil hour for him, turning a wrathful face upon the revilers, he diverted all their sport from Miss Canary to himself. "Bill," cried one, "isn't it going to thunder? It looks so very black." "I wish I was a nigger," roared another, "then I 'd be a black rose atween a couple of lilies, too." And then other pretty terms, such as "snowball," "powder-puff," were hurled at Cesar, who sat and grinned in helpless anger at the green curtain. And then poor Mrs. Aniseed! she shifted on her seat, and felt as if that terrible burning-glass which brings into a focus the rays of "the eyes of all the world" was upon her, and she was being gradually scorched to tinder. At length the tragedy, "George Barnwell," began. Kitty was now melted by George, and now put in fever-heat by Millwood, of whom, leaning back to speak to Mrs. Aniseed, she confidently observed, "I 'd have such creturs tore by wild osses." To this Mrs. Aniseed, reciprocating the humanity, curtly replied, "And so would I, dear."

The second act passed, when Kitty exclaimed, in a spasm of delight, "There he is; there 's little master. Look at him, Susan —a sweet cretur," and Kitty pointed out a beautiful child, who,

with its mother and father, had just entered the boxes. The child was superbly dressed, and when he entered wore a white beaver hat, with a large plume of pink and white feathers. "There he is," again cried Kitty; "we must drink his health." Whereupon Cesar produced the bottle, and the health of young St. James—he all the while unconscious of the honour—was drunk in Madeira from his paternal dwelling.

The play proceeded, and Kitty wept and sucked oranges—and wept, and sniffed salts, and fifty times declared it was too deep; she'd never come again—and then sucked another orange—and then, when the play was over, said she was glad it was done, though she had never enjoyed herself half so much. And then she said, "After all, I think a good cry sometimes does us good; it makes us remember we are human creturs. But oh, that Millwood, Susan. When women are bad—to be sure it 's so very seldom!—I 'm afraid they beat the men." Every tear, however, shed by Kitty at the play, was recompensed by a roaring laugh at the farce. And, at length, brimful of happiness—all being over—the party rose to go home. "Let 's see 'em get into the carriage—they needn't see us," said Kitty; and hurriedly they quitted the gallery, and ran round to the box-door.

Bright Jem was in the very heat of action; his mouth musical with noblest names. Dukes, Marquesses, and Earls fell from his lips, as he called carriage after carriage.

"Marquess of St. James's carriage," at length he cried with peculiar emphasis; and a superb equipage rolled to the door. The Marquess and Marchioness entered the vehicle, and a footman, lifting in the child, in his awkwardness knocked off the boy's superb hat: it rolled along the stones, and—was gone.

There was a sudden astonishment, and then a sudden cry of "Stop thief!" Constables, and Cesar, who with Mrs. Aniseed and Kitty, had been looking on, gave chase; and in a few minutes returned with the hat and the culprit, who, as it appeared, darting from under the horses' legs to the pavement, had caught up the property.

"Here 's the hat, my lord," cried a constable, "and here 's the little thief."

"Lord have mercy on us!" cried Mrs. Aniseed, "if it isn't that wretched child!"

"I know'd it! I always said it," cried Jem, almost broken-hearted. "I know'd he 'd come to it—I know'd it!"

It was even so. Young St. Giles was the robber of young St. James.

CHAPTER V.

Short was the distance from Covent Garden Theatre to Covent Garden watch-house; and, therefore, in a few minutes was young St. Giles arraigned before the night-constable. Cesar Gum had followed the offender as an important witness against him; whilst Bright Jem and his wife attended as sorrowing friends of the prisoner. Kitty Muggs was of the party; and her indignation at the wrong committed "on so blessed a baby"—we mean, of course, St. James—would have burst forth in loudest utterance had she not been controlled by the moral influence of Bright Jem. Hence, she had only the small satisfaction of declaring, in a low voice, to her sister, "that the little wretch would be sure to be hanged—for he had the giblet, every bit of it, in his countenance." With this consolation, she suffered herself to be somewhat painful. "The Lord help him!" cried Mrs. Aniseed. "Well, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to say such a thing!" whispered Kitty Muggs.

Bright Jem was sad and silent. As Cesar, with unusual glibness, narrated the capture of the prisoner with the stolen property upon him, poor Jem, shading his eyes with his hand, looked mournfully at the pigmy culprit. Not a word did Jem utter; but the heart-ache spoke in his face.

"And what have you got to say to this?" asked the night-constable of St. Giles. "You 're a young gallows-bird, you are; hardly out of the shell, yet. What have you got to say?"

"Why, I didn't take the at," answered young St. Giles, fixing his sharp black eyes full on the face of his interrogator, and speaking as though he repeated an old familiar lesson, "I didn't take it: the at rolled to me; and I thought as it had tumbled out of a coach as was going on, and I run arter it, and calling out, if nobody had lost a at, when that black gentleman there laid hold on me, and said as how I stole it. How could I help it, if the at would roll to me? I didn't want the at."

"Ha!" said the constable, "there 's a good deal of wickedness crammed into that little skin of yours—I shall lock you up. There—go in with you," and the constable pointed to a cell, the door of which was already opened for the reception of the prisoner.

And did young St. Giles quail or whimper at his prison

threshold? Did his young heart sink at the gloomy dungeon? Oh no. Child as he was, it was plain he felt that he was acting a part: he had become in some way important, and he seemed resolved to rise with the occasion. He had listened to tales of felon fortitude, of gallows heroism; and ambition stirred within him. He had heard of the Tyburn humourist, who, with his miserable jest in the jaws of death, cast his shoes from the cart, to thwart an oft-told prophecy that he would die shod. All these stories St. Giles had listened to, and took to his heart as precious recollections. While other children had conned their books—and written maxim copies—and learned their catechism,—St. Giles had learned this one thing—to be "game." His world—the world of Hog Lane had taught him that; he had listened to the counsel from lips with the bloom of Newgate on them. The foot-pad, the pickpocket, the burglar, had been his teachers: they had set him copies, and he had written them in his brain for life-long wisdom. Other little boys had been taught to "love their neighbour as themselves." Now, the prime ruling lesson set to young St. Giles was "honour among thieves." Other boys might show rewarding medals—precious testimony of their schooltime work; young St. Giles knew nothing of these; had never heard of them; and yet unconsciously he showed what to him was best evidence of his worth: for at the door of his cell, he showed that he was "game." Scarcely was he bidden to enter the dungeon, than he turned his face up to the constable, and his eyes twinkling and leering, and his little mouth quivering with scorn, he said—"You don't mean it, Mister; I know you don't mean it!"

"Come, in with you, ragged and sarcy!" cried the constable.

"Well, then," said the urchin, "here goes—good night to you," and so saying, he flung a summerset into the cell: the lock was turned, and Bright Jem—fetching a deep groan—quitted the watch-house, his wife, sobbing aloud, and following him.

"What can they do to the poor child?" asked Mrs. Aniseed of Jem, as the next morning he sat silent and sorrowful, with his pipe in his mouth, looking at the fire.

"Why, Susan, that's what I was thinking of. What can they do with him? He isn't old enough to hang; but he's quite big enough to be whipped. Bridewell and whipping; yes that's it, that's how they'll teach him. They'll make Jack Ketch his schoolmaster; and nicely he'll learn him his lesson towards Tyburn. The old story, Susan—the old story," and Jem drew a long sigh.

"Don't you think, Jem, something might be done to send him to sea? He'd get taken away from the bad people about

him, and who knows, might after all turn out a bright man." Such was the hopeful faith of Mrs. Aniseed.

"Why, there's something in that to be sure. For my part, I think that 's a good deal what the sea was made for—to take away the offal of the land. He might get cured at sea; if we could get anybody as would take him. I 'm told the sea does wonders, sometimes, with the morals of folks. I 've heard of thieves and rogues of all sorts, that once aboard ship, have come round 'straordinary. Now, whether it 's in the salt water or the bo'swains, who shall say? He wouldn't make a bad drummer neither, with them little quick fists of his, if we could get him in the army."

"Oh, I 'd rather he was sent to sea, Jem," cried Mrs. Aniseed, "then he 'd be out of harm's way."

"Oh, the army reforms all sorts of rogues, too," averred Jem. "Sometimes they get their morals pipeclayed, as well as their clothes. Wonderful what heroes are made of, sometimes. You see, I suppose, there 's something in some parts of the trade that agrees with some folks. When they storm a town now, and take all they can lay their hands on, why there 's all the pleasure of the robbery without any fear of the gallows. It 's stealing made glorious with flags and drums. Nobody knows how that little varmint might get on."

Here Jem was interrupted by the sudden appearance of a woman hung with rags and looking prematurely old. Misery and vice were in her face, though the traces of evil were for the time softened by sorrow. She was weeping bitterly, and with clasped, trembling hands, ran into the room. It was the wretched mother of young St. Giles; the miserable woman who more than six years before had claimed her child in that room; who had borne her victim babe away to play its early part in wretchedness and deceit. She had since frequently met Jem, but always hurried from him. His reproofs, though brief, were too significant, too searching, for even her shame to encounter. "Oh, Jem! Jem!" she cried, "save my dear child—save my innocent lamb."

"Ha! and if he isn't innocent," cried Jem, "whose fault 's that?"

"But he is—he is," screamed the woman. "You won't turn agin him, too? He steal anything! A precious cretur! he might be trusted with untold gold!"

"Woman," said Jem, "I wouldn't like to hurt you in your trouble; but havn't you no shame at all? Don't you know what a bit of truth is, that even now you should look in my face, and tell me such a wicked lie?"

"I don't, Jem—I don't," vociferated the woman. "He 's as innocent as the babe unborn."

"Why, so he is, as far as he knows what 's right and what 's wrong. He has innocence: that is, the innocence you 've taught him. Teach a child the way he should go," cried Jem, in a tone of some bitterness, "and you 've taught him the way to Newgate. The Lord have mercy on you! What a sweet babby he was, when six year and a half ago you took him from this room,—and what is he now? Well, well, I won't pour water on a drowned mouse," said Jem, the woman crying more vehemently at his rebuke, "but how you can look in that child's face, and arterwards look up at heaven, I don't know."

"There 's no good, not a ha'porth in all this preaching. All we want to know is this. Can you help us to get the young 'un out o' trouble." This reproof and interrogation were put in a hoarse, sawing voice by a man of about five-and-thirty, who had made his appearance shortly after St. Giles's mother. He was dressed in a coat of Newgate cut. His hat was knowingly slanted over one eyebrow, his hands were in his pockets, and at short intervals he sucked the stalk of a primrose that shone forth in strong relief from the black whiskers and week's beard surrounding it.

"And who are you?" asked Jem, in a tone not very encouraging of a gentle answer.

"That 's a good un, not to know me. My name 's Blast—Tom Blast; not ashamed of my name," said the owner, still champing the primrose.

"No, I dare say not," answered Bright Jem. "Oh, I know you now. I 've seen you with the boy a singing ballads."

"I should think so. And what on it? No disgrace in that, eh? I look upon myself as respectable as any of your folks as sing at your fine play-house. What do we all pipe for but money? Only there 's this difference; they gets pounds—and I gets half-pence. A singer for money 's a singer for money,—whether he stands upon mud or a carpet. But all 's one for that. What 's to be done for the boy? I tell his mother here not to worry about it—'twont be more than a month or two at Bridewell, for he 's never been nabbed afore: but it 's no use a talking to women, you know; she won't make her life happy, no how So we 've come to you."

"And what can I do?" asked Jem—"I 'm not judge and jury, am I?"

"Why, you know Capstick, the muffin-man. Well, he 's a householder, and can put in a good word for the boy with the beak. I suppose you know what a beak is?" said Thomas Blast,

with a satirical twist of the lip. "Not too fine a gentleman to know that?"

"Why, what does Capstick know of little St. Giles?" asked Jem.

"Oh, Jem," said the woman, "yesterday he stood his friend. He's a strange cretur, that Capstick; and often does a poor soul a good turn, as if he'd eat him up all the while. Well, yesterday arternoon, what does he do but give my precious child—my innocent babe—two dozen muffins, a basket and a bell."

"I see," cried Jem, with glistening eyes, "set him up in trade. God bless that muffin-man!"

"That's what he meant, Jem; but it wasn't to be—it wasn't to be," cried the woman with a sigh.

"No—it warn't," corroborated Mr. Blast. "You see the young un—all agog as he was—brought the muffins to the lane. Well, we hadn't had two dinners, I can tell you, yesterday; so we sells the basket and the bell for sixpenn'orth of butter, and did'nt we go to work at the muffins." And Mr. Blast seemingly spoke with a most satisfactory recollection of the banquet.

"And if they'd have pisoned all of you, served you right," cried Jem, with a look of disgust. "You *will* kill that child—you won't give him a chance—you will kill him body and soul."

"La, Jem! how can you go on in that way?" cried the mother, and began to weep anew. "He's the apple of my eye, is that dear child."

"None the better for that by the look of 'em," said Jem. "Howsomever, I'll go to Mr. Capstick. Mind, I don't want neither of you at my heels; what I'll do—I'll do by myself," and without another word, Bright Jem took his cap, and unceremoniously passing his visitors, quitted the room. His wife, looking coldly at the new comers, intimated a silent wish that they would follow him. The look was lost upon Mr. Blast, for he immediately seated himself; and seizing the poker, with easiest familiarity beat about the embers. Mrs. Aniseed was a heroic woman. Nobody who looked at her, whilst her visitor rudely disturbed her coals, could fail to perceive the struggle that went on within her. There are housewives whose very heartstrings seem connected with their pokers; and Mrs. Aniseed was of them. Hence, whilst her visitor beat about the grate, it was at once a hard and delicate task for her not to spring upon him, and wrest the poker from his hand. She knew it not, but at that moment the gentle spirit of Bright Jem was working in her; subduing her aroused passion with a sense of hospitality.

"A sharp spring this, for poor people, isn't it, Mrs. Aniseed?" observed Mr. Blast. "It seems quite the tail of a hard winter.

doesn't it?" Mrs. Aniseed tried to smile a smile—she only shivered it. "Well, I must turn out, I 'spose; though I havn't nothing to do till night—then I think I shall try another murder: it 's a long while since we 've had one."

"A matter of two months," said the mother of St. Giles, "and that turned out no great things."

"Try a murder," said Mrs. Aniseed, with some apprehension, "what do you mean?"

"Oh, there 'll be no blood spilt," answered Mr. Blast, "only a bit of Grub-street, that 's all. But I don't know what 's come to the people. They don't snap as they used to do. Why, there 's that Horrible and Particular Account of a Bear that was fed upon Young Children in Westminster: I 've known the time when I 've sold fifty of 'em afore I 'd blown my horn a dozen times. Then there was that story of the Lady of Fortin that had left Twins in the Cradle, and run off with her Husband's Coachman—that was a sure crown for a night's work. Only a week ago it didn't bring me a groat. I don't know how it is; people get sharper and sharper, as they get wickeder and wickeder."

"And you don't think it no harm, then," said Mrs. Aniseed, "to make bread of such lies?"

"What does it signify, Mrs. Aniseed, what your bread 's made on, so as it 's a good colour, and plenty of it? Lord bless you! if you was to take away all the lies that go to make bread in this town, you 'd bring a good many peck loaves down to crumbs, you would. What 's the difference atween me and some folks in some newspapers? Why this: I sells my lies myself, and they sell 'em by other people. But I say, Mrs. Aniseed, it *is* cold, isn't it?"

Mrs. Aniseed immediately jumped at the subtle purpose of the question; and only replied—"It is."

"A drop o' something would'nt be bad such a mornin as this, would it?" asked the unabashed guest.

"La! Tom," cried St. Giles's mother, in a half-tone of astonishment and deprecation.

"I can't say," said Mrs. Aniseed: "but it might be for them as like it. I should suppose, though, that this woman—if she 's got anything of a mother's heart in her—is thinking of something else, a good deal more precious than drink."

"You may say that," said the woman, lifting her apron to her unwet eye.

"And, there 's a good soul, do—do when you get the dear child home again—do keep him out of the streets; and don't let him go about singing of ballads, and—"

"That 's all mighty fine, Mrs. Aniseed," said Mr. Blast, who foiled in his drink, became suddenly independent in his language, —"all mighty fine: but, after all, I should think singing ballads a little more genteel than bawling for coaches, and making dirty money out of fogs, and pitch and oakum. A ballad-singer may hold his head up with a linkman any day—and so you may tell Jem, when you see him. Come along," and Mr. Blast twitched the woman by the arm—"come along: there 's nothing to be got here but preaching—and that will come in time to all of us."

"Don't mind what he says," whispered St. Giles's mother to Mrs. Aniseed, "he 's a good cretur, and means nothing. And oh, Mrs. Aniseed, do all you can with Mr. Capstick for my innocent babe, and I sha'n't say my prayers without blessing you." With this the unwelcome visitors departed.

We must now follow Bright Jem to the house of the muffin-man. Jem had already told his errand to Mr. Capstick; who, with evident sorrow and disappointment at his heart, is endeavouring to look like a man not at all surprised by the story related to him. Oh dear no! he had quite expected it. "As for what I did, Mr. Aniseed"—said Capstick—"I did it with my eyes open. I knew the little vagabond was a lost wretch—I could read that in his face; and then the muffins were somewhat stale muffins—so don't think I was tricked. No: I looked upon it as something less than a forlorn hope, and I won't flatter myself; but you see I was not mistaken. Nevertheless, Mr. Aniseed, say nothing of the matter to my wife. She said—not knowing my thoughts on the business—she said I was a fool for what I did: so don't let her know what 's happened. When women find out they 're right, it makes 'em conceited. The little ruffian!" cried Capstick with bitterness—"to go stealing when the muffins might have made a man of him."

"Still, Mr. Capstick," urged Jem, "there 's something to be said for the poor child. His mother and the bad uns in Hog Lane wouldn't let him have a chance. For when St. Giles ran home—what a place to call home!—they seized upon the muffins, and turning the bell and basket into butter, swallowed 'em without so much as winking."

"Miserable little boy!" exclaimed the softened Capstick,—and then he groaned, "Wicked wretches!"

"That 's true again," said Jem: "and yet hunger hardly knows right from wrong, Mr. Capstick."

Capstick made no answer to this, but looking in Jem's face, drew a long breath.

"And about the boy?" said Jem, "he 's but a chick, is he, to go to gaol?"

"It 's no use—it 's all no use, Mr. Aniseed; we 're only throwing away heaven's time upon the matter; for if the little rascal was hanged at once—to be sure, he is a little young for that—nevertheless I was about to say,"—and here the muffin-man, losing the thread of his thoughts, twitched his cap from his head, and passed it from right hand to left, and from left to right, as though he thought in such exercise to come plump again upon the escaped idea—"I have it," at length he cried. "I was about to say, as I 've an idle hour on hand, I 'll walk with you to Lord St. James, and we 'll talk to him about the matter."

Now Bright Jem believed this of himself; that in a good cause he would not hesitate—at least not much—to speak to his Majesty, though in his royal robes and with his royal crown upon his head. Nevertheless, the ease, the perfect self-possession, with which Capstick suggested a call upon the Marquess of St. James obtained for him a sudden respect from the linkman. To be sure, as we have before indicated, there was something strange about Capstick. His neighbours had clothed him with a sort of mystery; hence, on second thoughts, Bright Jem believed it possible that in happier days the muffin-man might have talked to marquesses.

"Yes," said Capstick, taking off his apron, "we 'll see what can be done with his lordship. I 'll just whip on my coat of audience, and—hush!—my wife," and Mrs. Capstick stirred in the back parlour. "Not a word where we 're going. Not that I care a straw; only she 'd say I was neglecting the shop for a pack of vagabonds: and perhaps she 's right, though I wouldn 't own it. Never own a woman 's right; do it once, and on the very conceit of it, she 'll be always wrong for the rest of her life." With this apophthegm, the muffin-maker quitted the shop, and immediately his wife entered it.

"Glad to see your sister looking so well, Mr. Aniseed," said Mrs. Capstick, somewhat slily.

"Oh! what, you mean Kitty? Why, she looks as well as she can, and that isn't much, poor soul," said Jem.

"She was here yesterday, and bought some muffins. A dark gentleman was with her," said Mrs. Capstick.

"You mean the black footman," observed Jem, dropping at once to the cold, hard truth.

"Well," and Mrs. Capstick giggled, as though communicating a great moral discovery, "well, there 's no accounting for taste, is there, Mr. Aniseed?"

"No," said Jem, "it was never meant to be accounted for, I suppose; else there 's a lot of us would have a good deal to answer about. Taste, in some things, I suppose, was given us to do what

we like with ; but, Mrs. Capstick, now and then we do sartainly ill-use the privilege."

"Lor, Mr. Capstick ! where are you going so fine ?" asked his spouse of the muffin-maker, as he presented himself in his best coat, and swathed in a very voluminous neckcloth. "Going to court ?"

"You see," said Capstick, "a man—a wretch, a perjurer, is to-day put in the pillory."

"And what 's that to you, Mr. Capstick ?" asked his wife.

"Why, Mary Anne, as a moral man—and, therefore, as a man who respects his oath, I feel it my duty to go and enjoy my egg." With this excuse—worthy of a Timon—did the muffin-maker take his way towards the mansion of Lord St. James. "It 's a hard thing," said Capstick on the road, "a hard thing, that you can't always tell a wife the truth."

"I always tell it to my old woman," observed bright Jem.

"You 're a fortunate man, sir," said Capstick. "All women can't bear it : it 's too strong for 'em. Now, Mrs. Capstick is an admirable person—a treasure of a wife—never know what it is to want a button to my shirt, never—still, I am now and then obliged to sacrifice truth on the altar of conjugal peace. It makes my heart bleed to do it, Mr. Aniseed : but sometimes it *is* done."

Bright Jem nodded as a man will nod who thinks he catches a meaning, but is not too sure of it. "And what will you say ?" asked Jem, after a moment's pause—"what will you say to his lordship, if he 'll see you ?"

Mr. Capstick cast a cold, self-complacent eye upon the linkman, and replied—"I shall trust to my inspiration." Jem softly whistled—unconscious of the act. Mr. Capstick heard, what he deemed a severe comment, and majestically continued : "Mr. Aniseed, you may not imagine it—but I have a great eye for gingerbread."

"No doubt on it, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, "it 's a part of your business."

"You don't understand me," replied the muffin-maker with a compassionate smile. "I mean, my good man, the gingerbread that makes up so much of this world. Bless your heart ; I pride myself upon my eye, that looks at once through all the gilding—all the tawdry, glittering Dutch metal—that covers the cake, and goes at once to the flour and water."

"I don't see what you mean, by no means," said Jem ; "that is, not quite."

"Look here, sir," said Capstick, with the air of a man who had made himself up for an oration. "What is that pile of brick before us ?"

"Why that you know as well as me," answered Jem; "it 's St. James's Palace."

"And there lives his gracious Majesty, George the Third. Now, I dare say, Mr. Aniseed, it 's very difficult for you to look upon his Majesty in what I shall beg leave to call a state of nature?"

"What! like an injun?" asked Jem. "Well, I must say, I can hardly fancy it."

"Of course not. When you hear of a king, he comes upon you in velvet and fur, and with a crown upon his head—and diamonds blazing upon him—and God knows how many rows of lords about him—and then all the household guards—and the state coach—and the state trumpets, and the thundering guns, and the ringing bells—all come upon your mind as a piece and parcel of him, making a king something tremendous to consider—something that you can only think of with a kind of fright. Is it not so?" asked the muffin-maker.

Jem merely answered—"Go on, Mr. Capstick."

"Now I feel nothing of the sort, I know the world, and despise it," said the muffin-maker.

"I 'll take your word for anything but that," cried Jem. "But go on."

"I tell you, sir, I hate the world," repeated Capstick, proud of what he thought his misanthropy: "and of sweet use has such hatred been to me."

Bright Jem cast an incredulous leer at the muffin-man. "I never heard of the sweetness of hatred afore. I should as soon looked for honey in a wasp's nest."

"Ha! Jem, you know nothing; else you 'd know how a contempt for the world sharpens a man's wits, and improves his eyesight. Bless you! there are a thousand cracks and flaws and fly-spots upon everything about us, that we should never see without it," said Capstick.

"Well, thank God! I 'm in no need of such spectacles," said Bright Jem.

"And for that very reason, Jem," said the muffin-maker, "you are made an every-day victim of—for that reason your very soul goes down upon its knees to things that it 's my especial comfort to despise. You haven't the wit, the judgment, to separate a man from all his worldly advantages, and look at him, as I may say, in his very nakedness—a mere man. Now Jem, that is the power I especially pride myself upon. Hence," continued the muffin-maker, and he brought himself up fronting the palace, and extended his right arm towards it—"hence I can take an emperor from his crowd of nobles—his troops—his palace walls—his royal

robes,—and set him before me just as God made him. As I 'd take a cocoa-nut, and tear away the husk, and crack the shell, and pare the inner rind, and come at once upon the naked kernel, —so, Mr. Aniseed, can I take,—aye the Great Mogul,—and set him in his shivering flesh before me."

"And you think the knack to do this does you good?" modestly inquired Bright Jem.

"It 's my solace, my comfort, my strength," answered the muffin-maker. "And this knack, as you have it, is what I call seeing through the gold upon the gingerbread. Now, isn't it dreadful to think of the thousands upon thousands who every day go down upon their knees to it, believing the gilded paste so much solid metal? Ha, Mr. Aniseed! we talk a good deal about the miserable heathen: the poor wretches who make idols of crocodiles and monkies,—but Lord bless us! only to think in this famous city of London of the thousands of Christians, as they call themselves, who after all are idolaters of gilt gingerbread!"

"Poor souls!" said Jem, in the fulness of his charity, "they don't know any better. But you haven't answered what I asked; and that 's this. What will you say to his lordship if he 'll see you?"

"Say to him? I shall talk reason to him. Bless you! I shall go straight at the matter. When some folks go to speak to rich and mighty lords, they fluster, and stammer, as if they couldn't make themselves believe that they only look upon a man made like themselves; no, they somehow mix him up with his lands and his castles, and his heaps of money,—and the thought 's too big for 'em to bear. But I will conclude as I began, Mr. Aniseed. Therefore I say I have a great eye for gilt gingerbread."

This philosophical discourse brought the talkers to their destination. Jem stooped before the kitchen-windows, prying curiously through them. "What seek you there, Jem?" asked Capstick.

"I was thinking," answered Jem, "if I could only see Kitty, we might go in through the kitchen."

Mr. Capstick made no answer,—but looking a lofty reproof at Jem, he took two strides to the door, and seizing the knocker, struck it with an assertion of awakened dignity. "Through the hall, Mr. Aniseed; through the hall; no back-stairs influence for me." As he made this proud declaration, the door was opened; and to the astonishment of the porter, the muffin-maker asked the porter, as coolly as though he was cheapening pippins at an apple-stall—"Can we see the Marquess?"

The porter had evidently a turn for humour: he was not one of those janitors who, seated in their leathern chairs, resent every knock at the door as a violation of their peace and com-

fort. Therefore, curling the corners of his mouth, he asked in a tone of comic remonstrance,—"Now what *do* you want with the Marquess?"

"That the Marquess shall be benefited by knowing," answered Capstick. "There is my name;" and the muffin-maker, with increasing dignity, handed his shop-card to the porter.

"It 's no use," said the porter, shaking his head at the card,—"not a bit of use. We don't eat muffins here."

At this moment, Cesar Gum, the African footman, appeared in the hall, and with greatest cordiality welcomed Bright Jem. "Come to see Kitty?—she delight to see you—come down tairs."

"Will you take this to the Marquess?" and twitching his card from the porter's fingers, Capstick gave it to Cesar. The black felt every disposition to oblige the friend of Kitty's brother, but raised his hands and shook his head with a hopeless shake. "Stop," said Capstick. He took the card, and wrote some words on the back of it. He then returned it to the porter.

"Oh!" cried the porter, when he had read the mystic syllables. "Cesar, I 'spose you must take it," and Cesar departed on the errand.

CHAPTER VI.

Now, we hope that we have sufficiently interested the reader, to make him wish to know the magic words which, operating on the quickened sense of a nobleman's porter, caused him suddenly to put a marquess and a muffin-maker in communication. What Open Sesame could it be, that written by a St. Giles, should be worthy of the attention of St. James? Great is the power of letters! Whirlwinds have been let loose—fevers quenched, and Death himself made to drop his uplifted dart—by the subtle magic of some brief *lex scripta*, some *abracadabra* that held in the fluid some wondrous spirits, always to be found like motes in the sunbeams, in a magician's ink-bottle. Mighty is the power of words! Wondrous their agency—their volatility. Otherwise how could Pythagoras, writing words in bean-juice here upon the earth, have had the self-same syllables printed upon the moon? What a great human grief it is that this secret should have been lost! Otherwise what glorious means of publication would the moon have offered! Let us imagine the news of the day for the whole world written by certain scribes on the

next night's moon—when she shone! What a blessed boon to the telescope-makers! How we should at once jump at all foreign news! How would the big-hearted men of America thereon publish their price-current of slaves—the new rate of the *pecunia viva*, the living penny in God's likeness—as the market varied! And France, too, would sometimes with bloody pen write glory there, obscuring for a time the light of heaven, with the madness of man. And Poland, pale with agony, yet desperately calm, would write—"Patience, and wait the hour." And the scribes of St. Petersburgh would placard "God and the Emperor"—blasphemous conjunction!—And the old Pope would have his scrawl—and Indian princes, and half plucked nabobs—and Chinamen—and Laplanders—and the Great Turk—and—

No—no! Thank heaven! the secret of Pythagoras—if indeed he ever had it, if he told not a magnificent flam—is lost; otherwise, what a poor scribbled moon it would be; its face wrinkled and scarred by thousands of quills—tattooed with what was once news—printed with playhouse bills and testimonials gracefully vouchsafed to corn-cutters! No. Thank God! Pythagoras safely dead, there is no man left to scrawl his pot-hooks on the moon. Her light—like too oft the light of truth—is not darkened by quills.

And after this broomstick flight to the moon, descend we to the card of Capstick, muslin-maker. The words he wrote were simply these—"A native of Liquorish, with a vote for the borough."

Now, it is one of the graceful fictions of the English constitution—and many of its fictions no doubt pass for its best beauties, in the like manner that the fiction of false hair, false colour, false teeth, passes sometimes for the best loveliness of a tinkered face,—it is one of these fictions that the English peer never meddles with the making of a member of the House of Commons. Not he. Let the country make its lower House of senators as it best may, the English peer will have no hand in the matter. He would as soon, in his daily walks, think of lifting a load upon a porter's back, as of helping to lift a commoner into his seat. We say, this is a fiction of the constitution; and beautiful in its influence upon the human mind, is fiction. Now, the Marquess of St. James had in his father's lifetime represented the borough of Liquorish. He was returned by at least a hundred and fifty voters as independent as their very limited number permitted them to be. The calumny of politics had said that the house of St. James carried the borough of Liquorish in its pocket, as easily as a man might in the same place carry a

rotten apple or a rotten egg. Let the reader believe only as much of this as his charity will permit.

Now it oddly enough happened that, at the time when Capstick sought to approach the Marquess, parliament was near its dissolution. The wicked old hag was all but breathing her last, yet—case-hardened old sinner!—she expressed no contrition, showed no touch of conscience for her past life of iniquity; for her wrongs she had committed upon the weak and poor; for the nightly robberies upon them who toiled for the especial luxury of those who, like the tenants of a cheese, lived and crawled upon unearned pensions; she repented not of the blood she had shed in the wickedness of war; never called about her soft-hearted, tearful, most orthodox bishops, to assuage the agony of her remorse, and to cause her to make a clean breast of all her hidden iniquity. No. Parliament was about to expire—about to follow her sinful predecessors (what horrid epitaphs has history written upon some of them!) and she heard no voice of conscience; all she heard was the chink of guineas pursed by bribery for her successor.

Even the Marquess's porter felt the coming of the new election. His fidelity to his master and his patriotism to merry England had been touched by a report that the borough of Liquorish was about to be invaded by some revolutionary spirit, resolved to snatch it from the time-honoured grasp of the house of St. James, and, at any cost, to wash it of the stain of bribery. Somebody had dared to say that he would sit for the independent borough of Liquorish though every voter should have a gold watch, and every voter's wife a silver tea-pot and diamond ear-rings. This intelligence was enough to make all true lovers of their country look about them. Therefore did the porter consider Mr. Capstick, although a muffin-man, a person of some importance to the Marquess. Capstick was a voter for the borough of Liquorish—that was bought and sold like any medlar—and consequently, to the mind of the porter, one of the essential parts of the British constitution: therefore, the porter was by no means astounded when Cesar returned with a message that Mr. Capstick was to follow him.

The muffin-maker passed along, in no way dazzled or astonished by the magnificence about him. He had made his mind up to be surprised at nothing. Arabian splendours—it was his belief—would have failed to disturb the philosophic serenity of his soul. He had determined, according to his own theory, to extract the man from the Marquess—to come, as he would say, direct at humanity divested of all its worldly furniture. Bright Jem meekly followed the misanthrope, treading the floor with gentlest

tread; and wondering at the freak of fortune that even for a moment had enabled him, a tenant of Short's Gardens, to enter such an abode. Bright Jem could not help feeling this, and at the same time feeling a sort of shame at the unexpected weakness. He had believed himself proof to the influence of grandeur,—nevertheless, he could not help it; he was somewhat abashed, a little flurried at the splendour around him. He was not ashamed of his poverty; yet he somehow felt that it had no business to intrude itself in such a paradise.

In a few minutes, the muffin-maker and Jem found themselves in a magnificent library. Seated at a table was a short, elderly little man, dressed in black. His face was round as an apple. He had small, sharp, grey eyes, which for a few moments he levelled steadily at Capstick and Jem, and then suddenly shifted them in a way that declared all the innermost and dearest thoughts of the muffin-maker to be, in that glance, read and duly registered. "Pray be seated," said the gentleman; and Capstick heavily dropped himself into a velvet chair. Bright Jem, on the contrary, settled upon the seat lightly as a butterfly upon a damask rose: and like the butterfly, it seemed doubtful with himself, whether every moment he would not flutter off again. Capstick at once concluded that he was in the presence of the Marquess. Jem knew better, having seen the nobleman; but thought possibly it might be some earl or duke, a friend or relation of the family. However, both of them augured well of their mission, from the easy, half-cordial manner of the illustrious gentleman in black. His words, too, were low and soft, as though breathed by a flute. He seemed the personification of gentleness and politeness. Nevertheless, reader, he was not of the peerage; being, indeed, nothing more than Mr. Jonathan Folder, librarian—and at times confidential agent—to the Marquess of St. James. He had just received the orders of his lordship to give audience on his behalf, to what might be an important deputation from the borough of Liquorish; hence, Mr. Folder, alive to the patriotic interest of his employer and friend—as, occasionally, he would venture to call the Marquess—was smiling and benignant.

"Mr. Capstick—I presume *you* are Mr. Capstick?"—and Mr. Folder with his usual sagacity, bowed to the muffin-maker—"we are glad to see you. This house is always open to the excellent and patriotic voters of Liquorish. There never was a time, Mr. Capstick, when it more behoved the friends of the Constitution to have their eyes about them. The British Constitution—"

"There is no constitution like it," observed the muffin-maker drily.

"That 's an old truth, Mr. Capstick," said Mr. Folder, "and, like all old truths, all the better for its age."

"No constitution like it," repeated the muffin-maker. "I don't know how many times it hasn't been destroyed since I first knew it—and still it 's all alive. The British Constitution, my lord, sometimes seems to me like an eel; you may flay it and chop it to bits; yet for all that, the pieces will twist and wriggle again."

"It is one of its proud attributes, Mr. Capstick," said Folder, —doubtless he had not heard himself addressed as my lord— "one of the glories of the Constitution, that it is elastic—peculiarly elastic."

"And that 's, I suppose, my lord,"—surely Mr. Folder was a little deaf,—"that 's why it gets mauled about so much. Just as boys don't mind what tricks they play upon cats—because, poor devils, somebody, to spite 'em, has said they 've got nine lives. But, I beg your pardon, this is my friend—Mr. James Aniseed, —better known as Bright Jem," and Capstick introduced the linkman.

Mr. Folder slightly rose from his chair, and graciously bowed to Jem; who, touched by the courtesy, rose bolt upright; and then, after a moment's hesitation, he took half-a-dozen strides towards Mr. Folder, and—ere that gentleman was aware of the design—shook him heartily by the hand. Then, Jem, smiling and a little flushed, returned to his chair. Again taking his seat, he looked about him with a brightened, happy face, for Mr. Folder —the probable nobleman—had returned the linkman's grasp with a most cordial pressure.

"And, Mr. Aniseed," said Folder, "I presume you have also a voice in the constitution; you have a vote for—"

"Not a morsel, my lord," answered Jem. "I hav'n't a voice in anything; all I know about the constitution is that it means taxes; for you see, my lord, I 've only one room and that 's a little un—and so, you see, my lord, I 've no right to nothing." Whilst Jem pursued this declaration, Mr. Folder, doubtless all unconsciously, rubbed his right hand with his handkerchief. The member might, possibly, have caught some taint from the shake of a low man without a vote.

"Nevertheless, Mr. Capstick, we are happy to see you," said Folder, with a strong emphasis upon the pronoun. "Public morality—I mean the morality of the other party—is getting lower and lower. In fact, I should say, the world—that is, you know what part of the world I mean—is becoming worse and worse, baser and baser."

"There is no doubt of it, my lord," answered Capstick,—"for if your lordship—"

Capstick had become too emphatic. It was therefore necessary

that Folder should correct him. "I am not his lordship. No, I am not," he repeated, not unobservant of the arched eyebrows of the muffin-maker: "I am deputed by his lordship to receive you, prepared to listen to your wishes, or to the wishes of any of the respectable constituents of the borough of Liquorish. We are not unaware, Mr. Capstick, of the movements of the enemy. But we shall be provided against them. They, doubtless, will be prepared to tamper with the independence of the electors, but as I have said," and Folder let his words fall slowly as though they were so many gems, "as I have said, there we can beat them on their own dirty grounds."

"There is no doubt whatever of it," said Capstick, "none at all. And then in these matters, there 's nothing like competition, —nothing whatever. For my part, I must say, I like to see it—it does me good: an election, such an election as we have in Liquorish, is a noble sight for a man who, like myself, was born to sneer at the world. At such a time, I feel myself exalted."

"No doubt—no doubt," said Mr. Folder.

"Then I feel my worth, every penny of it, in what is called the social scale. For instance, now, I open the shop of my conscience, with the pride of a tradesman who knows he 's got something in his window that people *must* buy. I have a handsome piece of perjury to dispose of——"

"Mr. Capstick! Perjury!" cried Folder, a little shocked.

"Why, you see, sir," said Capstick, "for most things, there 's two names—a holiday name, and a working-day name."

"That 's true," said Jem—and then he added, with a bow to Folder, "saving your presence, sir: quite true."

"Yes, I 'm a voter with a perjury jewel to sell," said Capstick, "and, therefore, isn't it delightful to me, as a man who hates the world, to have fine gentlemen, honourable gentlemen,—yes, titled gentlemen, coming about me and chaffering with me for that little jewel—that, when they 've bought it of me, they may sell it again at a thumping profit? The Marquess isn't that sort of man——"

"I should hope not. Mr. Capstick," said Folder, with a smile that seemed to add—impossible.

"Certainly not. But isn't it, I say, pleasant to a man-hater like me, to see this sort of dealing—to know that, however mean, and wicked, and rascally, the voter is who sells his jewel—he is taught the meanness, encouraged in the wickedness, and more than countenanced in the rascality, by the high and lofty fellow with the money-bag? Oh! in the school of corruption, ar'n't there some nice high-nob ushers?"

"Never mind that, Mr. Capstick," said Bright Jem, who began

to fear for the success of their mission, if the muffin-maker thus continued to vindicate his misanthropy. "Never mind that. We can't make a sore any better by putting a plaster of bad words to it: never mind that; but, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, earnestly, "let 's mind something else."

"Then I am to understand," said Mr. Folder, who, in his philosophy, had been somewhat entertained by the philippics of the muffin-maker,—"I am to understand, that your present business in no way relates to anything connected with the borough?"

"Not at present," said Capstick, "only I hope that his lordship won't forget I have a voice. Because——"

At this moment, the door flew open, and a child—a beautiful creature—gambolled into the room. It was young St. James. The very cherub, as Kitty Muggs would have called him, robbed by the iniquitous, the hopeless St. Giles. Truly he was a lovely thing. His fair, fresh young face, informed with the innocence, purity, and happiness of childhood, spoke at once to the heart of the beholder. What guilelessness was in his large blue eyes—what sweetness at his mouth—what a fair, white expanse of brow—adorned with clustering curls of palest gold! His words and laughter came bubbling from the heart, making the sweetest music of the earth; the voice of happy childhood! A sound that sometimes calls us from the hard dealing, the tumult, and the weariness of the world, and touches us with tender thoughts, allied to tender tears.

"What a beautiful cretur!" whispered Jem to the muffin-maker. "He 's been kept out of the mud of the world, hasn't he? I say; it would be a hard job to suppose that blooming little fellow—with rags on his back, matches in his hand, and nothin' in his belly, eh? Quite as hard as to think young St. Giles was him, eh? And yet it might ha' been, mightn't it?"

"Here is the future member for Liquorish," said Mr. Folder the child having run up to him, and jumped upon his knees. "Here, sir, is your future representative."

"Well, if he keeps his looks," said Jem, aside to Capstick, "you won't have nothing to complain of."

"Of course, the borough will be kept warm for the young gentleman," said the muffin-man. "He may count upon my vote—yes, I may say, he may depend upon it. In the meantime, sir, I come upon a little business in which that young gentleman is remotely concerned."

"You don't mean the shameful robbery last night?" said Mr. Folder. 'A frightful case of juvenile depravity! Another proof that the world 's getting worse and worse."

"No doubt of it," said Capstick; "worse and worse; it's getting so bad, it must soon be time to burn it up."

"The poor little boy who did it, sir," said Bright Jem, very deferentially, "didn't know any better."

"Know no better! Impossible! Why, how old is he?" asked Mr. Folder.

"Jist gone seven, sir, not more;" answered Jem.

"And here 's this dear child not yet seven! And do you mean to tell me that *he* doesn't know better? Do you mean in your ignorance to insinuate that this young gentleman would do such a thing—eh?" demanded Folder of the abashed linkman.

"Bless his dear, good eyes, no"—said Jem, with some emotion—"sartinly not. But then he 's been taught better. Ever since he could speak—and I dare say almost afore—every night and day he was taken upon somebody's knees, and teached to say his prayers—and what was good and what was bad—and besides that, to have all that was quiet and happy and comfortable about him—and kind words and kind looks that are almost better than bread and meat to children—for they make 'em kind and gentle too—now, the poor little boy that stole that young gentleman's hat—"

"I don't want the hat"—cried the child, for he had heard the story of the wicked boy at the playhouse—"I don't want it—he may have it if he likes—I told papa so."

"Bless you, for a sweet little dear," said Jem, brushing his eyes.

"The truth is, sir, I came here," said Capstick, "I came as a voter for the independent borough of Liquorish—to intercede with the magnanimity of the Marquess for the poor little wretch—the unhappy baby, for he 's no more—now locked up for felony."

"What 's the use?" asked Mr. Folder, dancing the scion of St. James upon his knee,—"what 's the use of doing anything for such creatures? It 's only throwing pity away. The boy is sure to be hanged some time—depend upon it, when boys begin to steal, they can't leave it off—it 's impossible—it 's against nature to expect it. I always give 'em up from the first—and, depend upon it, it 's the shortest way in the end: it saves a good deal of useless trouble, and I may say false humanity. As for what children are taught, and what they 're not taught—why I think we make more noise about it than the argument 's worth. You see, Mr. Capstick, there is an old proverb: what 's bred in the bone, you know—"

"Why, sir, saving your presence, if wickedness goes down from father to son, like colour—the only way I see to make the world better is to lay hold of all the bad people, and put 'em out of it

at once; so that for the future," concluded Jem, "we should breed nothing but goodness."

"Pray, my good man," asked Mr. Folder, "are you the father of the thief?"

"No, sir, I'm not. I wish I was, with all my heart and soul," cried Jem with animation.

"Humph, you've an odd taste for a father," shortly observed Mr. Folder.

"What I mean, sir, is this," said Jem, "I've the conceit in me to think that then the boy wouldn't have been a thief at all. He'd then been better taught, and teaching's everything. I'd have sent him to school, and the devil hasn't such an enemy nowhere as a good schoolmaster.* Even now I should like to try my hand upon him, if I could have him all to myself, away from the wickedness he was hatched in."

"I dare say you mean very well, my man, no doubt of it," said Mr. Folder. "Still, I think if the boy had a little taste of the jail,—"

"A little taste," groaned Jem, "if he has ever so little, he's pisoned for life; I know that, I've seen it afore."

"And so, sir," resumed Capstick, "I am come as a petitioner, and as a voter for the borough of Liquorish, to ask his lordship's compassion for this wretched child."

"Well, I'm sure, Mr. Capstick, I'll see what's to be done, I'm sure I will. Now will you,"—and Mr. Folder addressed himself smilingly to the child,—"will you ask papa, for your sake, to forgive the naughty boy that ran away with your hat?"

"Oh, yes, that I will," answered the child eagerly. "You know I don't care about the hat, I've plenty of hats. I'll run to papa now," and the child jumped from Folder's knee, and bounded from the room.

"There, my man," said Folder, with a smile of triumph to Bright Jem, "there you see the spontaneous work of a good nature."

"With good teaching," said Jem. "I know'd the little cretur that's now locked up—I know'd him when he was a babby, and if he'd only had fair play he'd ha' done the same thing."

"Let us hope he'll improve if he's forgiven," said Mr. Folder

* I will not say a village schoolmaster is a more important person in the state than he who is peculiarly entrusted with the education of the Prince of Wales, though I think *he is a far more important personage than the highest state officer in the King's household.* The material he has to deal with is man, and I think it would be rather rash to venture to limit his range or capacities.—*Lord Morpeth at the York Diocesan National Education Society.* [All honour to such nobility!]

"I will, however, go to his lordship, and know his fate." With this, Folder quitted the apartment on his benevolent mission.

"What a capital thought it was of you, Mr. Capstick, to come here; it had never entered my head," said Jem.

"Nothing like approaching the fountain source," said Capstick, serenely. "Besides, I know an election is near at hand; and as an election approaches, you can't think how it takes the stiffness out of some people. There 's no accounting for it, I suppose, but so it is."

"A great many books here, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, looking reverentially at the loaded shelves; "I wonder if his lordship 's read 'em all!"

"You see," answered the scoffing muffin-maker, "it 's not so necessary to read a library; the great matter 's to get it. With a good many folks heaps of books are nothing more than heaps of acquaintance, that they promise themselves to look in upon some day."

"Well," said Jem, his eyes glistening, "I never see books all in this fashion, without thinking that the man as has 'em is a kind of happy conjuror, that can talk when he likes with all sorts of good spirits, and never think a flea-bite of half the rubbish in the world about him."

Jem had scarcely uttered this hopeful sentence, when young St. James ran in, quickly followed by Mr. Folder. "Yes, yes," cried the child, all happiness, "papa says I must forgive him, as we ought always to forgive one another; and you 're to tell him from me that he 's to be a good boy and never do so again."

"Bless your sweet heart!" cried Bright Jem, and the tears sprang to his eyes. The muffin-maker said nothing, but coughed and bowed.

"There, I think, Mr. Capstick," said Folder in a low voice, "there, I think, is a future treasure for the borough. I trust you 'll not let this little story be lost on the good folks of Liquorish. Nobody will appear against the culprit, and therefore take him, and if you can, among you, make a bright man of him. Good morning, Mr. Capstick—good morning," and Folder bowed the visitors from the room. Bright Jem paused at the door, and looking back at the child, cried, "God bless you every day of your life."

Jem and the muffin-maker were about to quit the house, when they were accosted by Cesar Gum in the hall. In a confidential whisper he said—"Come and take some turkey and wine for lunch: prime Madeary—den we can go to jail for tief: dreadful ting, taking oder people's goods—come and hab some wine." And then in a still lower tone—"Give you bottle for youself."

To this invitation, Capstick made no answer; but having looked up and down at the black, strode to the door. Bright Jem nodded, uttered a brief good morning, and followed his companion into the street, leaving Cesar Gum, who had wholly forgotten Jem's previous indignation at the peculated gunpowder, in astonishment at his rejected hospitality.

"We 'll now go to Bow-street," said Capstick; and fast as they could walk, they took their way to that abode of justice. They arrived there only a few minutes before the arraignment of young St. Giles at the bar; where he stood, in his own conceit, a miniature Turpin.

"Where are the witnesses—who makes the charge?" There were no witnesses. Again and again his worship put the question. And then he said, "No one is here who knows anything of the matter. The prisoner must be discharged. Boy, don't let me see you here again." Young St. Giles put his thumb and finger to his hair, jerked a bow, and in a few moments was free, aye, freer than the air of Hog-lane.

Jem and Capstick followed him into the street. The muffin-maker seizing him, roared—"You little rascal! What do you say for your lucky escape?"

"Say!" answered young St. Giles—"Why, I know'd it was all gammon—I know'd they could prove nothin' agin me."

CHAPTER VII.

As it is our hope, in the course of this small history, to chronicle many great achievements of our hero of the gutter, St. Giles, we shall not follow him year by year through the humble yet industrious course, in which, to his own satisfaction and strengthening conceit, he became profoundly knowing; subtly learned in every way of petty peculation; whether he plundered the orange-baskets of Covent Garden market, or whether, with finest skill, he twitched the tempting handkerchief from the pocket of the lounger. Nor was this, his lowly career, undignified by suffering. No: for ere he was twelve years old, he had tasted the hospitality of Bridewell; where, in truth, he had been inducted into the knowledge of far dearer mysteries than he had ever hoped to learn. In Bridewell, his young and ardent soul had expanded with the thoughts of future fame, won by highway pistol, or burglar's jemmy. And there, too, would he listen to fairy tales of coining: would dream of easy, lasting wealth, acquired by

copper guineas. As for the lash bestowed upon him, the pain of that did but burn into his mind his high resolves. He would the more fiercely revenge the suffering upon everybody called honest. He would steal with all his heart and all his soul; he was born and bred to steal; he came into the world to do it, and he would notably fulfil his mission. Such was the strengthened belief of young St. Giles, when, at fourteen, and for the second time, he came back to the world across the threshold of Bridewell. Such was his creed: the only creed his world had taught him. Nevertheless, our hero did not vaunt this belief, save among those of his own Newgate persuasion. On the contrary, he assumed the character of a tradesman, that under his commercial aspect he might the more securely plunder the innocents who dealt with him. True it is, he had not the security of a shop; he could not, like his patron the dealer in marine stores, despoil across a counter; but he carried a basket; and whilst, to the unsuspecting eye, he seemed only the Arcadian vendor of chickweed, groundsel, and turf for singing-birds—for the caged minstrels of the poor—he was, in every thought, a robber.

It was a fine morning early in spring, and Plumtree-street resounded with the sharp tradesman cry of young St. Giles. Pausing at a door-step, and looking up to the second-floor windows, he pitched his commercial note with a peculiar significance, as though giving notice of his whereabout to an expected customer. "Chickweed for singing-birds," cried St. Giles, in a shrill, prolonged voice, as though he would send the glad tidings up to the garret casement, where hopped and fluttered some solitary linnet, some lonely goldfinch, that feeling the breath of spring, albeit through prison bars, sang a song of hope and cheerfulness. "Chickweed for singing-birds," cried St. Giles, with increasing volume and impatience. Then again he looked up at the window, and then muttered "The old un can't be dead, can she?" As he thus speculated the window was raised, and a woman looked down into the street. "Is it you, my poor boy?" she cried; "stop a minute;" and instantly disappeared. "Thought the old un couldn't be dead," said St. Giles, self-communing; and then he began to hum a tune and shuffle a dancing-step upon the pavement. The door was opened by a girl, who, with no very cordial looks, muttered,—"Mrs. Simmer—well, she 's a droll cretur, she is!—Mrs. Simmer says you 're to come up. You can leave your basket here, can't you?"

"In course, my beauty," said St. Giles, "'cause, you see, there 's only these two bunches left; and them I can carry in my hand without breaking my back." With this, St. Giles, rapidly placing his basket against the wall, gave a saucy wink to the

servant, and bounded like a kid up stairs. In a moment he was with his patroness, Mrs. Simmer.

"My poor child, I thought you was lost," said the dame in the kindest voice. "What makes you so late?"

"Why, do you know, mum, I can't tell what 's come to the chickweed: it doesn't grow no how, now. If I wasn't at five in the morning in Hampstead fields, a hunting in every edge, and haven't got above three penn'orth. Chickweed, mum, as Tom Blast says, seems a perishin' from the face of the earth, and only to spite poor people as lives by it. I don't know how much I couldn't ha' sold this mornin'; but I says to myself—no, there 's Mrs. Simmer's blessed little linnet, and her darlin' gooldfinch as draws his own water,—they sha'n't go without, whosomever does."

"Poor dear child! good little boy," said Mrs. Simmer, looking with softened looks upon the wily trader.

"And to hear how all the birds did seem to call to me from their cages—I 'm blessed if they didn't, mum, as I come along—but no, says I to 'em, it 's no use, my little cockies, no use to be gammonin' me—this here chickweed 's for Mrs. Simmer's Bob and Tit, and for nobody else whatsomever." And after this fashion was the simplicity of two-score and ten talked to and duped by precocious fourteen.

But dear Mrs. Simmer seemed to be one of those good old people who strangely enough carry their hearts in their heads. She had not been above a fortnight in London at the time of this interview with St. Giles, whom she had met in the street, and whose pathetic tale of destitution, delivered with the cunning of an actor, had carried away her sympathies. St. Giles, however, had another claim upon her. He was, she said, such a pretty boy. Dear soul! she could no more read a human face than she could read Sanscrit. She only saw the bright, glittering eyes of St. Giles, and not the fox that looked from them; she praised his eyes and face, as she might have praised a handsome hieroglyph, wholly unconscious of its subtle meaning. A great master has said, "there is something in true beauty that vulgar souls cannot admire." And sure we are, there is something in the truest rascality, that simple benevolent souls cannot detect. They have no eye for the worst counterfeit countenance; have no ear for a false voice, let it ring ever so brassily. Now, dear Mrs. Simmer was one of these: hence was she at fifty but a babe, an innocent, in the hands of young St. Giles.

"Now, my poor child"—she said, "take some tea. I've kept it for you, with some toast;" and Mrs. Simmer took a smoking jug and a plate piled with toast from either hob, and placed them

on the table, before her guest. "Take as much as you can, my child, and then you shall tell me all your story as you promised. Poor lamb! Bless you, eat—it does my heart good to see you;" and Mrs. Simmer, folding her hands, looked with almost maternal tenderness upon St. Giles, who acknowledging the welcome with a knowing nod, proceeded vigorously with his meal. Mrs. Simmer thought she never saw so handsome a creature; what St. Giles thought of Mrs. Simmer, we will not say. "And so you 've no father nor mother, my dear boy?" after some time asked Mrs. Simmer.

"Not one on 'em," answered St. Giles, rapidly moving his buttered chin. "Not one on 'em."

"The Lord help you!" cried Mrs. Simmer: "and no uncle, no aunt, no"——

"No nothin', mum," said St. Giles; and he gulped his tea. "All on 'em died, mum, when I was a babby."

"Poor dear child! Bless my heart! And how have you been brought up?"

"Brought up, mum"—and St. Giles grinned and scratched his head—"you said brought up, mum? Don't know, mum."

"And where do you live, now, my poor boy?" and Mrs. Simmer melted with every question.

"Don't live nowhere, reg'lar, mum. Poor boys, like me, why we live—as Tom Blast says—like the rats, where we can. Then o' nights, mum, I sometimes sleeps in the market among the baskets. Sometimes, though, don't they come with a stick, and cut us out! I b'lieve you!" and St. Giles seemed to speak with a lively recollection of such incidents. "Cuts the werry breath out o' you," he then significantly added.

"Cruel creatures! Gracious little lamb! And I 'm afraid you meet with bad boys there, eh? Wicked boys, that may some day tempt you to do something wrong? Eh?" asked simple Mrs. Simmer.

"Believe you," said St. Giles, with well-acted gravity. "Lots on 'em wanted me to go picking pockets."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Mrs. Simmer, and the tears came to her eyes.

"That 's what I said, mum; no, says I, no, I shall stick to chickweed if I starves for it—I 'm not a-going to be hanged to please nobody: no, mum."

"That such a precious flower should be thrown away!" cried Mrs. Simmer to herself; and then to St. Giles: "You 're a good boy; I 'm sure you 're a good boy. And tell me; I hope you go to church?"

"Oh, I should like it so!" cried St. Giles: "but you see, mum, it 's not to be done."

"How so, my boy?" asked Mrs. Simmer.

"Look here, mum," and St. Giles, with the coolness of a philosopher, drew his feet up almost level with the table, and, with his forefinger, pointed to his ten muddy toes, that showed themselves through the parted shoe-leather. "Parson wouldn't have 'em, by no means. I did once try to go to church; I did begin to feel so wicked. Well, mum, if the beadle didn't come up, mum, and nearly cut me in two, mum."

"How wicked — how barbarous!" said the ingenuous Mrs. Simmer.

"And only for my bad shoes, and the oles in my coat; but that 's how they serves poor boys, mum. I don't think it 's kind, mum; do you, mum?" And St. Giles tried to look at once injured and innocent.

Mrs. Simmer wiped her eyes, making an effort to be calm. She then said, "I 've been thinking, if I could get you a place in a gentleman's house."

"Wouldn't that be prime?" cried St. Giles: and as he spoke, there rang through the house a loud and hurried knock at the street-door. Mrs. Simmer, without a word, jumped to her feet, and ran to the window.

"Well, I declare! if it isn't that blessed child! if it isn't his lordship!" she cried.

Young St. Giles, at the word lordship, slid from his chair, and looked slyly about him. Was it possible that a lord could be coming into that room? Could he imagine such a thing as to see a real lord in such a place? Ere St. Giles had done wondering, the room-door was flung open, and in ran young St. James. St. Giles seemed to shrink into himself at the splendid appearance of the new-comer. He wore a bright scarlet coat, thickly ornamented with gold buttons: and a black beaver hat with a large, heavy feather of the same colour, brought out in strong contrast his flushed and happy face. For the moment, young St. Giles felt himself overpowered, abashed by the magnificent outside of the little stranger. He sidled into a corner of the room, and looked at that scarlet coat as though it had been something dropt from the heavens. "Well, nurse," cried St. James, with a loud, ringing laugh, "I told you I 'd come and see you, and here I am. I went out riding with Mr. Folder. Well, he stopt to talk to somebody, and so I just gave him the slip, put Jessy into such a gallop, and was here in a minute. I say, can't that boy," and St. James pointed his riding-whip towards St. Giles—"can't that boy hold Jessy, instead of the girl?"

"To be sure, my lord—to be sure," cried Mrs. Simmer.

"Sartinly, my lord—directly, my lord—I knows how to hold osses, my lord," said St. Giles, in a flutter.

"Just walk her up and down a little, will you, for she 's hot," said St. James, with an early knowledge of horse-flesh.

"Yes, my lord—to be sure, my lord—walk her up and down, my lord:" and St. Giles flew down the stairs, and relieved the girl of her charge. Young St. James was then left to have his gossip with Mrs. Simmer; from which gossip a stranger might have learned that the good woman had, for years, been in the service of the family of St. James; that she had been the favourite nurse of his young lordship; and that for the first time in her life she had come to London from the country, where, made comfortable by a pension granted to her by the marchioness, after a short sojourn in the metropolis, it was her purpose to return. She had been to the house in the square, where young St. James had made his chivalrous promise to visit her; yes, at all hazards, to seek Plumtree-street, out of pure love, and a little frolic, to his old nurse. "Oh, I shall be at home now before Mr. Folder," said young St. James, in answer to the fears of Mrs. Simmer, alarmed at the escape of the young gentleman from his tutor. However, we must leave them and descend to the pavement to St. Giles.

With an air of becoming gravity, the boy led the pony up and down before the door, his eyes riveted upon the beast; certainly a creature of extreme beauty. She was jet black, of exquisite delicacy of outline; and her arched neck, quivering nostril, and fiery eye, told something for the spirit and horsemanship of the boy who rode her. Up and down St. Giles walked; and now looking at the animal, now thinking of the boy lord, it appeared to him that all the treasures of the world were concentrated in that pony; that St. James was a sort of earthly angel; a being of altogether another kind to the boys St. Giles had ordinarily met with. There was something so magnificent about the pony and its rider, that only to have had his lordship to speak to him, that only to hold the bridle of his steed, seemed in the confused brain of St. Giles to redeem him from somewhat of his misery and lowliness. He could not but think the better of himself for all time to come. He had spoken to a lord—had held his horse! Could any of his gutter companions boast such greatness? These thoughts were busying the mind of St. Giles, when he heard himself addressed by a familiar voice. "What! my flower?" was the greeting; and St. Giles, turning, beheld his friend and tutor, Tom Blast. St. Giles, in his last retirement to Bridewell, had had the advantage of Tom's tuition; and, to speak truly, the teacher and pupil were worthy of each other. Tom was a

scoundrel of most extensive experience; and had the happy art of so simplifying his knowledge, that he made it available to the meanest understanding. St. Giles, however, had no need of any such condescension: he could jump at a meaning, good or bad, half-way. Hence, the teacher and the taught respected each other for their mutual excellence. In fact, Tom Blast looked upon Young St. Giles, as his Newgate son; and St. Giles—in default of another—considered Tom as the best of fathers.

"What have you got here?" asked Tom, his eye sparkling all over the pony.

"Got a oss to hold," said St. Giles, with an inquiring look at Tom. Then he added, sinking his voice—"it belongs to a lord: sich a little chap, and yet a lord."

"Well, she 's a beauty," said Blast: "make her walk a little faster."

"She *is* a beauty," cried St. Giles, boldly venturing an opinion, and quickening the animal's pace.

"What a sweet trot!" said Blast, "so light and so free! Why she wouldn't break a egg-shell, would she?"

"I should think not," answered St. Giles, a little flattered that his opinion was solicited.

"Come up!" cried Blast, urging the beast into a quicker pace. "Come along, sweet-lips!"

"Stop, Tom; stop!" said the prudent St. Giles, when he had arrived in Bedford-square. "Blest if we don't turn back, if they won't think we 're a going to steal her; and that wouldn't do, no how, would it, Tom?" asked the boy, and his eye encountered Tom's thoughtful look.

"Why,—no," answered Tom with some deliberation. "No; it wouldn't—turn her round agin; and walk her gently, Giles; gently, pretty cretur." And as St. Giles complied, Tom turned too, walking with meditative eye that now glanced at the boy and now at the pony. Ambitious thoughts busied the brain of the poor, timid thief, Tom Blast; and he pondered on the means whereby he could reap the profits of a stolen horse, still assuring to himself exemption from the tragic penalty. For many years Tom had from time to time eaten stolen bread; nevertheless, he had lived, as it were, upon the crumbs, the broken morsels of crime. He had never had the courage to dare Tyburn that he might dine, but he satisfied himself with the pickings of petty larceny. No: he never promised to earn for himself either biography or portrait in the Newgate Calendar. Hence, he was a little perplexed at the temptation that would intrude itself upon him as he glanced at Lord St. James's satin-coated pony. Fortune seemed willing to make him a handsome present of

horse-flesh, if he had only the valour to accept it. No; he would not be tempted: he had resolved to die a natural death, and therefore he resolutely dismissed the demon that would destroy him. Nevertheless, he thought it possible that policy might achieve what courage failed to attempt. He might accomplish all by a stroke of wit, profiting in security by the danger of another. St. Giles might be made the robber, and Tom Blast, in happiest safety, pocket the proceeds. Thus ruminating, Tom again reached Mrs. Simmer's door.

"Not wanted yet," said St. Giles, looking from the door to the window. "We 'll give her another trot, eh?" And at the word the pony was turned towards Bedford-square.

"Gently," said Blast, "gently. Why don't you have a ride upon her? The young lord wouldn't know nothing of it. And what if he did? He couldn't take the ride out of you again. Only not so big, else she 's the very pictur—yes the very moral of Dick Turpin's Bess," said Blast, looking critically, admiringly, at Jessy. "Get up, and don't be a young fool," he added; and then St. Giles—he hardly knew how it was accomplished—found himself in the saddle. "There, that 's something like life, isn't it?" said the tempter suddenly, speaking from the whole breadth of the pavement, and every other minute looking cautiously behind him the while he mended his pace, and St. Giles jerked the pony into a trot. "That 's something like living for, eh? and I should like to know why you shouldn't have it just as soon as any little lord whatsomever?"

"Ha! wouldn't that be prime, Tom?" cried St. Giles, his eyes sparkling, and face glowing. "Wouldn't it be prime?"

"It 's nothing more than what you ought to have; why you ride as well as if you was born upon her back—give her her head a little more—now down this way," sharply added Blast; and then rapidly turning to the right, he ran on, St. Giles trotting hard after him. Arrived at the east side of Russell-square, Tom suddenly halted. "Now, St. Giles," said he, "are you man enough to make your fortin?"

"I should think so," said Giles, in high spirits with his feat of horsemanship.

"Now listen to a friend, Giles—a friend as never yet deceived you," said Blast with sudden gravity. "Throw away this bit of luck, and you may never get another. Take the pony and sell it." St. Giles stared. "Why not, you fool! you may as well" —cried Blast—"you 've stole it you know."

"Stole it!" cried St. Giles.

"It 's all the same; there 's nobody as would believe otherwise —so I 'll stand your friend, and get you the money for the

bargain. Ha! I see—you hav'n't no pluck in you—not a bit," said the taunting friend.

"Ain't I, though? jist you see," cried young St. Giles, determined to do anything.

"Well, then, as you 've got yourself into a bit of trouble, I 'll stand by you. Now, you listen; just dash as hard as you can through the fields, and then turn to the right—and so round and round, until—you know the way—until you drop down upon Smithfield. Then make for Long Lane; and then just afore you get to the Blue Posts—get off and lead the pony up and down as if you was holding her for somebody—and then in a crack I 'm with you. Now, look sly, and your fortin 's made. Young Turpin for ever! Off with you!" And so saying, the Tyburn monitor slapt the pony smartly with his broad hand, and the mettlesome creature bounded forth, young St. Giles with difficulty keeping the saddle. Away went the pony up the Long Fields and away towards Islington! The words "young Turpin" still rang in the ears of St. Giles, as he cantered along. He felt that he had already done something worthy the exalted name bestowed upon him; and as his blood mounted with the exercise, he imagined future triumphs that would make him glorious. The robbery of the horse was, for the time, altogether forgotten in the increased importance that had fallen upon him. He dreamt not of the punishment attending the theft; he only thought of the hatful of guineas that the stolen property would produce him. And then, as he rode, how petty and contemptible did his former pickings and stealings appear to him; he almost felt ashamed of himself, comparing his past petty larcenies with this his crowning achievement. From the moment he had taken leave of boyhood. He had suddenly become a man, by the grace of daring felony. Then, he thought, how should he ever be able to spend the money? Would he not have a scarlet coat with gold lace to it,—ay, much finer than the little lord's? And would he not go to the play every night, and have his hot supper afterwards? And would he not flourish money in a hundred ways that should make all his old companions—the little dirty, paltry thieves of Hog Lane—look up to him with devotion and astonishment?

Still young St. Giles ambled along, and still the world seemed changed to him. All things about him bore a brighter hue; all things sounded with a sweeter music; his brain seemed on wings, and his lightened heart danced in his bosom. And—poor wretch—this ecstacy of ignorance arose from evil, from a crime whose fatal effects, certain as death, would follow him. Still the very houses, to his fancy, took a new and pleasant aspect; wherever he looked he saw a new face of happiness—whatever he heard

came toned with a new note of harmony. He saw not the blackened stones of Newgate—heard not the freezing accents of the death-dooming judge. Miserable, foolish wretch!

Yet how often do men—in the ripeness of worldly wisdom—imitate the folly, share the ignorance of young St. Giles! Elated by the commission of some profitable wrong, seeming secret, too, as profitable—how often to them does Fortune seem to put on a new and shining face, when at the very time she grasps the lash, or drugs the bitter bowl that shall revenge the wickedness. For a brief time does successful evil put a new tint of outside beauty upon all the world; and happy knavery rejoices in the cunning that makes the world to him so beautiful. What a plodding, leaden-eyed fool is mere honesty; what an oaf, an ass, compared to him who squares his code of morals by his seeming interest! And then full surely time advances, and the world, that looked so fresh and smiling, is hollow-cheeked and ghastly—its beauty wiped away, even as a harlot's paint. Successful knavery, dizzied with its luck, sees suddenly delicious scenes—a paradise of worldly joy and life-long rest—then, waking to the truth, beholds around it burning, barren sand. If the mature pilgrims of the world are sometimes so deceived, why not the boy St. Giles?

Still the young, yes, and happy, felon trotted on, until he entered Smithfield. He then walked the pony slowly up Long Lane, and soon as he espied the Blue Posts, faithful to his orders, he dismounted, looking anxiously around him for his friend and instructor, Tom Blast. A quarter of an hour passed, and still he came not. And then, and for the first time, he looked at the stolen goods with lowering eyes, and his heart felt leaden. What was he to do with the pony without Tom? Nobody would buy it of him. And then a deeper and a deeper shadow fell upon all things; and, biting his lips, young St. Giles, with eyes—quick as rats'—looked about and about him. What an ugly brute the pony seemed to him! Yes; he knew what he would do: he would jump upon the pony, gallop back to Plumtree-street, and swear he had only been for a ride. Anything to be well clear of the pony. With this thought St. Giles had his foot in the stirrup, when he was tapped upon the shoulder by a man plainly and comfortably dressed in a dark-grey suit, wearing a light flaxen wig in tight curls, surmounted by a large beaver hat, scrupulously sleek. He had a broad, fat face, with a continual smile, laid like lacker upon it. And, when he spoke, he spoke very gently and very softly, as with lips of butter.

"My dear little boy," said the stranger, patting St. Giles affectionately on the back, "where have you been so long?"

St. Giles looked—he could not help it—very suspiciously at the

stranger; then scratching his head, he observed, "Don't know you, sir."

"I dare say not; how should you, my dear? But you will know me, and for a friend. I've waited for you these ten minutes."

St. Giles said nothing: nevertheless his thoughts were never more active. He by no means liked the appearance of his new friend; he felt afraid of him. He would fling himself into the saddle, and gallop off. As he determined upon this, the stranger, in the gentlest manner, twitched the bridle from his hand, and gently said, "My little dear, it 's all right."

"All right!" cried St. Giles; and somehow he felt that his stolen pony was about to be stolen from him—"what 's all right?"

"You came from Plumtree-street." St. Giles winced. "Now you know you did; don't tell a lie, my little dear; for don't you know what comes of little boys who tell lies? I have seen your friend, and paid him; it 's all right; but as you 're such a nice little boy, here 's a guinea for yourself." St. Giles's heart rose somewhat at the guinea. "You're to go into the house, and wait for Mr. Blast." St. Giles's eyes twinkled at the name: of course, as the stranger averred, it must be all right. "Stop, don't change the guinea; here 's a shilling too, my little dear. Now, go in—I don't want to be thanked—only let me see you go in, that you mayn't come to any harm in the street." St. Giles, taking a last look at the pony, entered the Blue Posts. The stranger and the pony went—who shall say whither?

St. Giles meekly seated himself in a corner of the hostelry, ordering for his refection two pennyworth of ale, and bread and cheese. And when he had somewhat solaced his inward boy, he began to wonder when Tom Blast would come. Hour after hour passed, and still St. Giles remained alone. Again and again he looked at the clock—again and again at the guinea. Never before had he possessed such wealth: and the contemplation of his riches in a great measure abated his anxiety for the arrival of Tom; even though he thought of him as the bearer of other guineas, the purchase-money of the pony. Still, there was the charm, the fascination of ready gold to comfort St. Giles; and the glitter of the money held him like the eye of a snake. His only perplexity was how he could best spend the guinea. He was deep in these thoughts when, the room having filled, his attention was awakened by a man who, talking very loudly—and with his clenched fist beating the table the while—about what he called the abstract beauty of honesty, gradually hushed all speakers into reverent listeners. The man was about the

middle-time of life, drest somewhat like a grazier. He seemed prematurely bald, which questionable defect gave to his head an outside look of wisdom, possibly not warranted by the contents. He had one of those large clear faces, often called open, because probably there is nothing positive in them. He was earnest and voluble in his speech, as though his arguments welled up from his heart, and would out.

"You have said, sir," he cried, "that honesty is the best policy. You have been pleased to call that a golden maxim?"

"I have," answered a huge, dull-looking man, in a butcher's coat. "I have," he repeated; sucking his pipe, and winking his small eyes.

"Sir," cried the bald-headed orator, "I call it the maxim of a rogue and a rascal."

"Hallo! Hallo!" cried some, and "Prove it—prove it," rhonted others.

"Prove it! Why it 's as plain as the door of Newgate. Now, listen, gentlemen, if you please. Honesty is the best policy, that 's what I have to tackle. Very well. What is honesty? I ask you that. Why, I suppose, it 's not to pick a man's pocket—it 's not to steal his purse, or his coat, or his sheep, or his horse?" Young St. Giles turned his eyes from the speaker. "It 's not to put off bad money, or to give short measure, or light weight?"

"Stick to the pint," cried a man with an apron, apparently a small shopkeeper.

"I am sticking to it," resumed the orator. "Now, I tell you again that that maxim isn't the maxim of a good man, but of a rascal; of a fellow that wants to be rewarded for not stealing—for not passing off bad money—for not giving short measure. He says, no says he, I 'll be honest, not because I love honesty for itself, but because it 's all to my advantage to be honest. No, gentlemen. Make honesty *not* the best policy, and then show me the man that loves it. That 's my man—that 's the true heart, gentlemen. But to follow honesty because it 's the best policy—why, I repeat it, it 's nothing more than the calculation of a sneak-up—of a fellow that hasn't the courage to be a rogue. No: give me honesty naked as truth; that 's the honesty I love best. I don't want to be bribed for being honest! Eh?" and he gazed triumphantly around him.

"I want you," said a man, putting his head in at the door, and looking with strange significance at the speaker.

"Damn it!" cried the orator, and immediately obeyed the summons.

Oh, abstract honesty! bleed for thy worshipper; for in less

than three minutes was he handcuffed at the door on a charge of street robbery.

To return to young St. Giles, an attentive, though unenlightened listener to the lecturer upon honesty. St. Giles had heard of honesty; had some dim notion of its meaning. It was a something especially made for people who had all things comfortable about them: so much he knew of honesty: but for honesty in the abstract,—in that he was as ignorant, ay, as even some of his betters.

The hours passed, and still Tom Blast came not. Evening approached—night shut in—midnight came, and St. Giles, with a heavy heart, though lightened somewhat by his guinea, turned into the street. He could not go home—no; at least, for a time, Hog Lane must be to him a forbidden Paradise. No matter. Had he not a guinea—a whole guinea—to himself? The thought, even in the midnight street, fell like a sunbeam upon him; he sprang from the pavement with a shout, reckless with his wealth. He would make a night of it—yes, he would have all things glorious! And with this hilarious wilfulness, he took to his heels, and was speedily housed for the night within the very shadow of the walls of Newgate.

CHAPTER VIII.

For more than a week did St. Giles live upon his guinea. True it is, that for the first day or two he dined and supped in the Apollo of an eastern cook-shop; besides taking his luncheon of fried fish in the Minories, for the which delicacy, the Hebrews thereabout dwelling enjoy a just renown. But these days of Carnival past, St. Giles economised, with a fine knowledge of the resources of the metropolis. Twopence awarded to him the sweets of sleep beneath a roof; and a shilling saw him safely through the day. However, let not the reader imagine that St. Giles—like many a great genius—was made dull and inactive by the golden reward of his ability; a circumstance to be so often deplored in the case of great authors, great painters, and especially of great philosophers; wherefore, it is questionable, if the world would not really gain more by them if it never rewarded them at all. St. Giles was not one of these. No: he still kept his eyes wide open at the doings of life; still hived, in that odd, world-twisted little brain of his, all sorts of knowledge for the future day. He especially employed part of his time, hanging

about the haunts of Tom Blast; but, strange to say, that interesting person never showed himself in any of his wonted places of ease and recreation. Again and again did St. Giles travel Long-Lane—again slink and spy into every haunt, in the fond and foolish hope of once more meeting with the soft-spoken man who, at the ruinous price of one guinea one shilling, had purchased a pony of incomparable Arab blood. St. Giles, with all his friendship, all his gratitude for Tom, could not but feel that he had been tricked, bamboozled by his tutor; and the nearer and nearer he approached to his last shilling, the more intense was his indignation—the more insatiable his appetite of revenge.

It was the ninth day of St. Giles's absence from his maternal home, and the pilgrim of London stood before a house of humble entertainment in Cow Cross. The time was noon; and St. Giles, feeling the last threepence in his pocket—turning them over, one by one—was endeavouring to arbitrate between pudding and bed. If he bought a cut of pudding—and through the very window-pane he seemed to nose its odour—he had not wherewithal to buy a lodging. What of that? London had many doorways—hospitable stone-steps—for nothing; and pudding must be paid for. Still he hesitated; when the cook-shop man removed the pudding from the window. This removal immediately decided St. Giles. He rushed into the shop, and laid down his last worldly stake upon the counter. "Threepenn'orth o' puddin', and a good threepenn'orth," said St. Giles. With a look of half-reproof and half-contempt the tradesman silently executed the order; and in a few moments, St. Giles stood upon the king's highway, devouring with great relish his last threepence. Whilst thus genially employed, he heard a far-off voice roar through the muggy air: his heart beat, and he ate almost to choking, as he listened to these familiar words:—"*A most True and Particular Account of the Horrible Circumstance of a Bear that has been Fed upon Five Young Children in a Cellar in Westminster!*" It was the voice of Blast; and St. Giles swallowed his pudding, hurriedly used the back of his hand for a napkin, and following the sound of the crier, was in a trice in Peter-street, and one of the mob that circled the marvel-monger of Hog-Lane. Nevertheless, though Tom roared with an energy that very strongly declared his own faith in the horror that he sought to vend for only one halfpenny, his auditors lacked credulity or coppers for the well-worn enormity. Nobody purchased. Not even a timorous, sympathising servant-maid advanced through the crowd to make the mystery her own. Tom felt it. His standing in the world as a tradesman was fast crumbling from beneath his feet. St. Giles was hurrying up to his old and early friend, when, at a short

distance, he beheld his former patron, Capstick, the muffin-maker, and Bright Jem. They looked, as he thought, somewhat curiously at his friend Tom, and then seemed to take counsel of one another. Under these circumstances, St. Giles thought that to accost Tom would be to call unnecessary attention to himself. He, therefore, remained, shrunk down among the mob that every moment became less and less. What, too, made it most discouraging to Mr. Blast were the scoffs and loud laughter with which certain new-comers would listen to the description of the horror sought to be circulated, and then hurry off. "That cock won't fight now!" cried one. "A little late in the day for that. Get something new," cried another. "Gammon!" shouted a third.

Nevertheless, be of good heart, Tom Blast; take consolation from this. You suffer in great society; you sink in most worshipful companionship. Very reverend, grave, authoritative persons —men of the bench, even of the pulpit—who, for centuries, sold to their exceeding profit, "Most True and Particular Accounts" of a horrid bear of some sort—whether of royal or feudal privilege—of witchcraft—of popery—of sham rebellion—nay, fifty bears and bugbears, all of horrid, ghastly nature,—they, too, in their turns, have outlived the profitable lie. And even in these latter days, when some Tom Blast in higher places,—nay, in the highest—sounds his tin horn of bigotry, and would trade upon some bear apocryphal, he is assured in the like sense, although in gentler phrase, that such cock will by no means fight—that the day has passed for so foolish, vain a story—that, finally, his bear is no bear at all, but briefly, yet intensely, gammon. Has not history her catch-pennies, even as the archives of Seven Dials?

Mr. Blast was somewhat of a philosopher. He could have borne the laughter and scoffing of the crowd, if any of them had bought his ware; but his philosophy was not of that transcendental kind to endure outrage, unmitigated by any sort of coin, even the smallest, current in the realm. He therefore, with a *sotto voce* expression of the deepest contempt for his hearers, broke from the crowd, passing on, and then—his legs evidently walking in a passion—turning, he strode still onwards until he entered Cow Lane. Here, St. Giles, hanging at his skirts, came up with him.

"Well, if it isn't a sight for bad eyes to see you!" said the unabashed Tom. "But don't let 's talk in the street." And Tom made for an opposite public-house, one of his customary places of call, unknown to St. Giles. Stalking through the passage, followed by his young friend, he made his way into a small, dark, low room. "I thought there 'd be nobody here," said Tom; and then in a tone of great tenderness and anxiety, looking

straight in the eyes of St. Giles, he asked, "Well, and where have you been? They 're mad about you in the Lane. Where have you been?"

"Why, I 've been looking for you," said St. Giles, moodily nodding his head. "You must have know'd that."

"And that 's, I suppose, why we didn't happen to meet," replied Tom; possibly recollecting that his chief care had been to keep out of the boy's way. "Why, what 's the matter? you look plaguy sarcy! What are you looking so black at, you young devil?" cried Tom, with sudden ferocity; but St. Giles felt his injuries, and was not to be browbeaten.

"Why, I 'm a looking at you,—and not much to look at neither," shouted St. Giles, with answering vigour. "You 're not a goin' to frighten me, I can tell you. Why didn't you come as you promised you would? You 're a good un, you are!"

"Now, what does ail the boy?" said Tom, coaxingly; though evidently ill at ease: for his fingers worked; and he bit his lip as he gazed on the boy, who, with sullen, defying air, returned his stare.

"Why, this ails me. Didn't you tell me to take that pony to Long Lane—and then didn't you tell me to wait for you?"

"I know it, Giles; I know it; but you see, as I went along, I thought agin over the matter. I thought, you see, it might lead you into trouble, if I come; so I thought I 'd stay away, and you 'd bring the pony home agin, and then, mayhap, after a little breeze, there 'd be an end of the matter. That 's it, Giles," said cautious Mr. Blast.

"Then, why did you send the man as give me a guinea, and took the pony away? Him as said, too, that he 'd made it all right with you, and——"

Here St. Giles was interrupted in his volubility by Mr. Blast; who performed—and an admirable performance it was—a look of immense astonishment, at the same time whistling very vehemently. At length, mastering his wonder, he cried—"Why, Giles! you 've never sold the pony?"

"No. I never sold it—but you did; the gemman told me so. You sold it; and after that——"

Mr. Blast could scarcely contain himself, so big, so swelling was his compassion for the injured boy. "Oh, Giles," he cried—"poor little fellow! You 're done, Giles; you 're done."

"And who 's done me? Why, you have," screamed the youngster in a paroxysm of passion. All childhood vanished from his face; so suddenly was it convulsed with rage. He stood, for a moment, breathless with anger; and forgetful in his fury of the bulk and strength of his former teacher, he

clenched his little fist, and grinding his teeth, advanced towards Blast, who, for a moment, recoiled from the small assailant. Then, recovering himself, he laid his hands upon his knees, and with an effort to be calm, contemptuous, said, "And this, you little varmint, is your thanks to me; to me, you scorpin, as has been better than a father to you! To me, who 's taught you ballad-chanting, and everything as is decent you know; to me, as has laid awake in my bed thinkin' what I could do for you in the mornin'; to me, who 's always looked on you as a rasher of my own flesh! And you 'll shake them little mawleys at me!" The picture of ingratitude was almost too much for Mr. Blast. He was nearly melted in his own tenderness.

"None o' that—that won't do for me, no how," cried St. Giles. "You made me steal the pony—you sold it, and now—"

The charge was too much for the indignant virtue of Mr. Blast. With an exclamation of disgust, he aimed a blow at his accuser, that but for his agility, would have laid him senseless on the floor. Bobbing his head and doubling himself up with wonderful elasticity, St. Giles escaped the meditated punishment, and the next moment saw him fastened on Tom; clasping him round the waist, and kicking with all his might and malice at his benefactor's shins. Tom, mad with pain and vexation, sought to fling the urchin off; but he held to his prey like a stoat. For some moments the boy heroically suffered the worst punishment that his master in iniquity could inflict, returning it with unequal powers. At length, Blast unclasping the urchin's hold, seized him in his arms, and threw him violently off. The boy fell, stunned, against the wainscot. The infuriate savage, his passion raging, was about to deal a blow—it would have been the last—upon the prostrate boy, when Capstick, Bright Jem, and a couple of officers burst into the room. Blast immediately divined their business, and with masterly coolness observed, pointing to St. Giles lying in the corner a senseless heap—"There 's your young oss-stealer for you; and a nice job I 've had to nibble him. A varmint of a pole-cat as he is!"

"The young un and the old un, too," said one of the officers. "Why this is better luck than we bargained for."

Jem lifted the boy between his knees; he was still pale and senseless. "Mr. Capstick," said Jem, "for God's sake, some water!" Then turning an indignant look upon Blast, he added, "Why, what a paving-stone you must have for a heart, to use a poor child like this."

"A child!" cried Blast, "a young devil!"

"And if he is," said Jem, "who 's made him one? Murder! why it 's the worst of murders; to take and kill all the good in a

child's soul, and then to fling him into the world to do his worst, and answer for 't."

"There, there, never mind, Jem," cried Capstick, who was turning himself round, and shuffling about, visibly affected by the miserable condition of the child, yet struggling to maintain his outward misanthropy. "All wretches; all alike, worthless animals!" And then he roared at the waiter as he entered—"Why don't you bring some water—some brandy—anything, everything for this poor creature—this miserable—helpless—forlorn—unhappy little boy?" Again Capstick turned his face in a corner, and violently blew his nose, and coughed, and vowed he never had such a cold in all his life.

"There, there," said one of the officers, as Jem bathed the boy's face, "he 'll come round again, never fear."

Jem groaned, and shook his head. "Yes, he will come round," he said. "If it wasn't that blood would be on somebody's head, it would be a good thing, if he never did. Lord! Lord!" cried Jem, "to think that this is the babby's face I once knew!"

"Pooh—pooh!—nonsense," said Capstick; "we 've nothing to do with that; nothing at all. The ends of justice—the ends of justice, Mr. Aniseed,"—and again the muffin-maker coughed; he had such a cold.

However, whilst Jem—with his heart running at his eyes—is solacing young St. Giles, we will, as briefly as we may, inform the reader of the cause that has brought the muffin-maker and the link-man to Smithfield.

Ever since the conclusion of our sixth chapter—which the urbanity of the reader will consider to be no less than six years ago—fortune smiled upon Capstick. True it is, she often smiles upon the strangest lumps of men—is oft a very Titania enamoured with an ass's head—nevertheless, she showed good judgment in the favours she bestowed upon the muffin-maker. So fortune made interest with her good sister fame to play a flourish on her trumpet in praise of Capstick's muffins; that in time rejoiced many hearths without the circle of St. Giles's. In a word, Capstick soon built an enduring reputation upon muffins; and therefore had a better chance of his name going buttered down to posterity than has the name of every monarch duly buttered in birth-day ode. Well, the calls upon Capstick's oven were so increasing, that his wife suggested he should forthwith start a horse and very genteel cart. She, good woman! had no eye to a Sunday drive—the vanity never entered her head; all she thought of was business: which she had no wish whatever to adulterate with even a drop of pleasure. Mr. Capstick was somewhat twitted with himself that such proposal emanated from his wife:

it was so good, so reasonable, it ought to have been his own. However, he would say, the woman had caught something like judgment by living with him. At once, then, Mr. Capstick consented to the vehicle; and that purchased a bargain, he took his way—in pestilent hour for him—to Smithfield, to buy a horse. Now, Mr. Capstick knew no more of the points of a horse than of a unicorn. As, however, he had little faith in human nature, and none whatever when mixed up with horse-flesh, he said to himself that he might as well be cheated at first hand as at second; therefore, went he alone to buy a steed. Arrived in the market, full soon was he singled out by a benevolent, yet withal discerning dealer, who could see in a twinkling the very sort of thing that would suit him. "A nice little cretur that would eat nothing, and go fifty miles a day upon it." In brief, the worthy man sold to the muffin-maker, sold to him for an old song—to be sure, he could afford to let it go thus cheap—the black pony which only two days before had been the valued possession of Lord St. James. For four-and-twenty hours only did the muffin-man rejoice in his purchase; for on his very first attempt to degrade the high-blooded animal to a cart—it was quite as fit to draw St. Paul's—the creature, although its flowing tale and mane had been ruthlessly docked and cropped—was identified by Cesar Gum, on his way with a sisterly message to Short's Gardens. Never before had Mr. Capstick known the full value of a good character. His story of the transaction was received as truth; and though he lost the ten pounds—the value of the old song—he had given for the animal, he maintained his untarnished reputation. Of course, St. Giles was soon known as the horse-stealer. It also came out, that Mr. Thomas Blast had been seen in very earnest conversation with the boy, as he led the pony. Every search was made for Tom; and as, with a modesty not usual to him, he seemed wholly to have withdrawn himself from his native parish, curiosity to learn his whereabout was the further quickened. Mr. Capstick felt his judgment, his pocket, too, somewhat involved in the transaction. He felt that he stood fair and upright in the eye of the world, nevertheless it would be to him a peculiar satisfaction could he detect Mr. Thomas Blast, or the benevolent, simple-spoken tradesman who—for the price of an old song—had sold the pony. With this wish thumping at his heart, Capstick every day visited Smithfield and its neighbourhood; taking with him Bright Jem, whom he had accustomed himself to think an honest, worthy fellow, and his particular friend; that is, so far as the misanthropy of the muffin-maker would acknowledge the possible existence of such a treasure. It was strange, however, that Capstick, in his thoughts of revenge, had no thought of

young St. Giles. No: all the vehemence of his wrath was roused against the boy's tutor.

We have now, we trust, sufficiently explained the course of accidents that brought the muffin-maker and Jem to Porter street, and so made them hearers of the unprofitable oratory of Tom Blast. Fearful that they might be recognised by him, they employed a third party to watch him to his haunt, whilst they secured the attendance of officers. Hence, they saw not St. Giles, who, as we have before observed, kept himself close among the mob. They were the more astonished to find the ill-used boy in the same room with his schoolmaster.

"There, now—he 's all right," cried one of the officers, as St. Giles—restored by the efforts of Bright Jem—looked about him. However, no sooner was he conscious of the presence of Capstick and his fast friend Jem, than his face glowed like a coal. He hung down his head, and burst into tears: there was no sham whimpering—no taught effort of sorrow—but the boy's heart seemed touched, melted, and he wept and writhed convulsively. A recollection of the goodness—the disregarded kindness of the men before him—thrilled through his soul, and though he knew it not, he felt the yearnings of a better nature. There was anguish—penitence—in the sobs that seemed to tear his vitals.

"Thank God for that!" cried Jem; and the poor fellow wept, too. "I like to hear that,—eh, Mr. Capstick?"

Mr. Capstick felt an odd queasiness in his throat, and could say nothing. He therefore again threw himself upon his pocket-handkerchief. Then, conscious that he had a great duty to perform for the ends of justice—a fact that, when otherwise puzzled, he had more than once insisted upon—he turned to the officers, and pointing his thumb towards Blast, observed with peculiar loftiness, "You will be good enough to handcuff that man."

"Handcuff me!" cried Mr. Blast. "They 'll do it at their peril."

"Ha! my good man—I beg your pardon—you desperate scoundrel!" said Capstick with withering urbanity, "they 're accustomed to do a great deal at their peril; thanks to such rascals as you. Handcuff him!"

"They darn't do it—they darn't do it," shouted the struggling Blast; and in a moment afterwards his wrists were locked in iron. "I 'll make you pay for this—never mind; it 's no matter to me—but I 'll make you pay for this," he said; and then, like a Tyburn philosopher, Tom became suddenly reconciled to his manacles.

We will not dwell upon the details of the examination of the

prisoners. It will be sufficient for the reader to know that, after certain preliminaries, a sitting alderman committed St. Giles and his tutor for horse-stealing. Both scholar and master awaited their trial in Newgate.

It was not until after the culprit's first examination, that Capstick felt the full annoyance of his position. When Jem would shake his head, and look dumpish on the matter, Capstick would talk loud, and beg him to think of the ends of justice; but when the boy was committed on the capital charge, the muffin-maker's public spirit wholly forsook him. Evidence had brought the accusation quite home to the boy; however legal proof might fail to criminate his tempter. "They 'll never—never think of much hurting the boy—a child, you know—a mere child?" said Capstick to Jem, as they left Guildhall together.

"Humph! I don't know what you call hurting, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, moodily. "But I shouldn't think hanging nothin'."

Capstick turned pale as flour, and he could scarcely articulate the words—"Impossible—ridiculous—they couldn't do it."

"Ha!" cried Jem, "when hanging 's the thing, you don't know what they can do. Well, I 'd rather ha' been in bed, with a broken limb, than had a finger in this matter. I shall have that poor child always about me: I know I shall. When he 's killed and gone, I shall never take my pipe without seeing his face in the fire. And then my poor old woman! She that still 's so fond of him—poor orphan thing! for his mother 's worse than lost to him—she 'll lead me a nice life—that is, though she won't say anything outright, she 'll always be a crying about him. We 've done a nice thing, Mr. Capstick, to make our lives pleasant as long as they last!"

"Pooh, pooh—folly, Jem; all folly. I suppose property must be protected. I suppose you won't deny that, eh?" asked Capstick.

"I deny nothing," answered Jem hopelessly; and then he groaned "God help us! Why didn't he die in the frost and snow? Why did I warm him, when a babby, at my own fire, only to help to hang him arterwards?"

"Hang him! Nonsense! I tell you, Jem, you 're a fool—an old, butter-hearted fool—and you know nothing. Here have you lived all your life with the worst of people about you—not but what folks at the very best are great rascals, every one of 'em—but here you have been up to your ears in villainy—and yet you look upon everybody about you as innocent as shepherds and shepherdesses in white china. I 'm ashamed of you, Jem; be a man, and think of the world as its rascality deserves. For, Lord!

what a lump of roguery it is! How that the blessed sun should ever condescend to smile upon such a lot of wretches as we are, I can't tell!"

"No more can I," answered Jem: "but since the sun, as you say, does demean himself to show a good face to us, I think it 's as little as we can do to try to do the same to one another."

Capstick, taken somewhat aback, looked suddenly round upon Jem; and then, feeling himself wholly unable to controvert this opinion, he simply said, "Jem, you 're a fool."

A week passed, and the trial of St. Giles approached. It was strange to Mr. Capstick that so many of his customers would ask him about his health. "Why, what can ail the people?" he would say. "I was never better—never in all my life. I eat like a pig, and sleep like a dormouse; can any man do better than that?" But Mr. Capstick was not well. The biped pig made poor meals; the human dormouse had restless nights; and when dreaming, dreamt horrid visions of death and Newgate.

It wanted some ten days of the trial, when Bright Jem presented himself at Capstick's house. "You see," said Jem, "they 're getting some money in the Lane so that they may have a lawyer for poor St. Giles. Well, they 're a bad lot, I dare say; but you should only know what some of the poor souls have done."

"And what have they done?" asked Capstick, with what he meant for a sneer.

"Why, some as had two blankets have sold one on 'em; some with two gowns have pawned one o' them. It would make you bless yourself, Mr. Capstick, to see besides what things they 've made twopences and threepences of—kettles, sarcepans, anything. It 's wonderful to see how they do stick by one another."

"Crime, Mr. Aniseed, crime is a brazen cord—and certainly does hold rogues together," said Capstick.

"You may say what you like," said Jem, "but whenever I 've looked up that horrid Lane, and seen men and women like devils, and children—poor creturs—like devils' little ones,—I never could have thought that in that dismal place there was after all a sort of good, that the very best of us wouldn't be any worse for having more of it."

"Very like; very like," said Capstick. "And I am to understand, that the people want to fee a lawyer?"

"That 's it," replied Jem. "There 's a Mr. Tangle, somewhere in Clifford's Inn; he 's a sharp un. They say he 'd get a chap out o' Newgate; get him out through a flaw no bigger than a key-hole. Well, I 've been thinking—not that I can do much—but I 've been thinking, that as we helped to get the boy into

Newgate, if we was to give what money we could to help to get him out."

"And so defeat the ends of justice?" cried Capstick, and he frowned severely.

"Oh, I dare say it's wrong," said Jem; "nevertheless, if we could only get the boy safe off, he might be a good un after all. Didn't you hear how he cried? Oh, there's heart in him yet, I'm sure there is. Well, then, you see—"

"I see perfectly," said Capstick, "you've come to ask me to subscribe to the fund for the lawyer?"

"Well, that's jest it," assented Jem.

"Forgetful of my serious responsibility as a witness—forgetful of the ends of justice—forgetful of what I owe to society—forgetful—"

"Forgetful," cried Jem, with animation, "of everything except of saving a child from the gallows."

"Mr. Aniseed," said Capstick very decidedly, "I am sorry to refuse you anything, but you must not let your feelings blind you: you mean well, but you have yet to learn that the best meaning men are those who often do the most mischief. In a word, sir, I can have nothing to say to this business."

Bright Jem made no answer, but with a moody nod was about to leave the shop, when the muffin-maker called to him. "I think you said this attorney's name was Wrangle?"

"Tangle," said Jem, shortly.

"Tangle, Lyon's Inn?" said Capstick.

"Clifford's-Inn," cried Jem, a little sulkily, and then he darted from the shop.

It is most true that Mr. Tangle deserved the high reputation bestowed upon him by Jem. His office in Clifford's-Inn was considered a private outlet from Newgate. Many and many a time, when the fatal halter seemed inevitable, had Tangle, by some deft device, turned the running into a slip-knot, and the hangman been defrauded by the quibbler. Many a gentleman had Mr. Tangle restored to the road, none at all the worse for durance. Many a highwayman, on his solitary midnight watch, might think with gratitude of the master-spirit of Clifford's-Inn.

It was the evening of the day on which Bright Jem solicited Capstick, and Mr. Tangle sat in the solitude of his chambers. He was sunk in profound study; possibly, pondering how to find or make a flaw: how to give to the line of right a zig-zag, profitable bend for some consulting client shut in Newgate stones. His clerk was out: therefore, his knocker being struck, he rose himself and opened the door. A tall, bulky man, wrapped in a great-coat, a hat slouched over his face, tied by a handkerchief

that almost covered his features, stalked into the room. Mr. Tangle was not at all surprised: not at all. So many odd people—so strangely appointed—every sessions called upon him.

"You are Mr. Tangle," said a voice that most assuredly belonged to Capstick, the muffin-maker. Mr. Tangle bowed. "You are interested in the case of a boy, one St. Giles?"

"I have been consulted," said Tangle in his dry way. "A bad case; confessedly, a bad case; still, something may be done. You know 'till a man's hanged, there's always hope; that is, if there's always——"

"Money." Mr. Tangle smiled and nodded. Mr. Capstick took a small leathern bag from his pocket, from which he counted out ten guineas. "I am not a rich man, Mr. Tangle," said Capstick.

"I am sorry for it," said Tangle (and evidently with a feeling of sincerity): "otherwise the ten might have been fifty."

"But do what you can for that wretched boy—only save him from hanging, and there's twenty more."

"Thirty pounds," said Tangle; "it's doing it—if indeed it's to be done at all—very cheap; too cheap. Nevertheless, as you're not a rich man, I'll not refuse money. What name?"

"Never mind that," said Capstick. "I think I've given you enough to show that I'm in earnest. Now, only save the child, and as God's in heaven you shall have the other twenty."

"We'll see what can be done," said Tangle, showing Capstick to the door—"I have hopes; great hopes."

And the trial came on, and St. Giles and Thomas Blast were arraigned for stealing a pony of the value of fifty pounds, the property of the Marquess of St. James. Nothing could be clearer than the evidence against the boy, as delivered by young St. James, Mrs. Simmer, and her servant. But legal proof was wanting against Blast. True, he had been seen talking to St. Giles, as the boy led the pony; but nothing more. There was no doubt that the man who had taken the animal from St. Giles in Long Lane was an accomplice of Blast's, but he was not to be found—there was no proof. Whereupon, Thomas Blast was acquitted; and young St. Giles found "Guilty,—Death."

CHAPTER IX.

"GUILTY,—DEATH!"

What familiar syllables were these in the good old times—the time of our history! In those happier days, how many goods and chattels, live stock and dead, were protected, watched by Death! Death was made by law the guardian of all things. Prime agent, great conservator of social right—grim keeper of the world's moveables. Death, a shepherd, avenged the wrongs of stolen mutton; Death stood behind every counter, protector of chapman's stock; Death was the day and night guard of the highway traveller against the highway thief; Death watched ox and ass; the goose on the common, the hen on the roost. Even at the altar, Death took his cautious stand, that Hymen might not be scoffed, defrauded by wicked biganist. *De minimis curabat Mors.* Turn where he would, the rogue's path was dug with graves. Nevertheless, the world grew no better; made no visible return to that happy state, ere hemp was made a sovereign remedy for wrong. And so by degrees Death lost somewhat of his reputation with the great ones of the world; and by degrees many things were taken out of his charge. It was found that sheep were stolen, tradesmen's goods lifted, pockets picked, hen-roosts forced—and maids wickedly married by men already bound,—it was seen that these abominations continued and increased, aye, in the very face of the great ghastly bugbear Death, and so his watch and ward were made a lighter task; he was gradually relieved of many of his social duties; the world, to the astonishment of some folks, still spinning on its axis, though the life of immortal man was not, as in the good old times, offered to stolen colt, to the king's gracious face unlawfully stamped in counterfeit metal, to a hundred other sins all made mortal by the wisdom of untaught humanity. Truly, justice, turning back the leaves of the gaol calendar, might sit awhile in sackcloth and ashes, penitent for past transgressions—past wrongs committed in her moral blindness! The sword of justice! An awful weapon truly: a weapon, working out the will of highest Providence; a solemn instrument which man solemnly acknowledges. This has been, and may be. Yet, thinking of the world's mistakes; of the cruel blunders worked by law on man, the sword of justice—of so-called Christian justice robed and ermined—may sometimes seem to the eye of grieved

humanity as terrible as the blood-dripping tomahawk of the wild revengeful savage. The sword of justice! May not the time come—it *will* come, as surely as the sun of far-off years—when justice shall lay down her sword? when with better wisdom, she shall vindicate her awful mission to mankind, yet shed no drop of blood?

Let us return to St. Giles; to the boy in his fifteenth year, spawned upon the world and reared by daily wrong and ignorance, a morsel for the hangman: now, a condemned thief, palsied and aghast with terror, upon the very threshold of the world; to be flung therefrom, an offering to the majesty of offended law. Grim majesty—ghastly Moloch! Stately wickedness, with robes dyed in the blood of sinning ignorance! A majesty, that the principle of all evil may too often smile upon as its working genius here on earth. A majesty as cold and pulseless as the idol whose wooden nostrils know not the sacrifices its darkened worshippers prepare it. But St. Giles will now know there is a government—a knot of the wise and good, whose harmonious souls combined make up the music of the state; the moral melody that softens and refines the rugged, dull-eared mass. He will now know this; the hangman will teach it him. A sharp, short lesson; the first and last prepared him by a paternal state.

"Guilty—death!" Such was the verdict. Tom Blast breathed heavily, and a faint smile flickered at his lips as he felt assured of his escape. Still he durst not turn his eye towards his boy-victim in the dock. Conscience was at the felon's heart; and seared, withered as it was, it felt the sudden horror of remorse. His features grew pale, then dark; were for a moment convulsed; then instantly—daring no look at St. Giles—he disappeared from the dock. The boy stared about him with a foolish gaze; and then began to sob. There was no terror—no anguish in his face. It was the grief of a boy doomed to a whipping, not the gibbet: and it was such sorrow—such seeming childish ignorance of the impending horror—that to those who looked upon him made his condition more terrible. And then again it seemed impossible that the sentence so sonorously uttered, should be carried out. Could it be that such an array of judges, such wisdom, such learning, such grave and reverend experience, should be opposed to a miserable child, of no more self-accountability than a dog? Appalling odds! Could it be thought that the scene was a frightful reality of daily, breathing life? Was it not a grim farce—a hideous, foolish mockery? Could the wise hearts of men, fathers of well-taught, well-tended, happy children, doom that child to death? That miserable item of human ignorance, that awful reproach to those who made laws to protect property, but left the

outcast poor a heedless prey to their own unbridled instincts? Nevertheless, the law would hang St. Giles; and grave, respectable church-going men, in the very cosiness of their ignorance, would clasp their hands, and raise their eyes, and pity and wonder at the wickedness of the new generation!

A turnkey in the dock took St. Giles by the hand, and in a moment the boy had disappeared. "Good God!" cried a voice, convulsed with grief. "Silence in the court!" exclaimed the crier; and immediately another wretch took his place at the bar, and the terrible course of law continued. It was Capstick, whose exclamation had called down the official rebuke; it was really Capstick, although even the wife of his bosom might have paused ere she acknowledged him; so suddenly and frightfully had the brief business of the trial wrought a change in him. His flesh seemed jaundiced, and his black eyes, violently dilated, rolled restlessly about. His face appeared of a sudden sharpened like the face of a sick man; and his arm shook, palsied, as with his nails he grasped the arm of Bright Jem. "Let us go," said Jem, chokingly, "we can do no good here;" and Capstick, staring stupidly about him, suffered himself to be led from the court. In a few moments they stood in the Old Bailey. It was a lovely spring night. The breath of May, even in the Old Bailey, came sweet and odorous, carrying freshness to the heart and brain. The moon shone with brightest, purest lustre: all the stars of heaven seemed visible; all looking down in their bright tenderness, as though they looked upon a kindred sphere of purity and light, and loved it. Capstick gazed at the magnificence, and the tears thick and fast fell from him. Then in a subdued, a comforting voice, he said, "No, Jem, no; it 's a wickedness to think it; there 's a God in heaven, and they can't do it."

"Hadn't we better see Tangle, the lawyer?" asked Jem. "He hasn't done much, to be sure; still he may yet do something. I didn't see him nowhere in the court—saw nobody but his clerk."

"Yes, we 'll see him—we 'll see him," said Capstick. "He 's a scoundrel; but then he 's fitter for the world. For the truth is, Jem, we 're all scoundrels." Jem made no answer to this charitable creed. "All scoundrels: and I 'm about the poorest, meanest, shabbiest villain of the lot. And yet you 'll see how I shall carry it off. They 'll hang this wretched boy—oh, never doubt it, Jem! they 're bad enough for anything—they 'll hang him. And I shall still go on sleek and smooth in the world; making muffins and laying by the pennies; paying rent and taxes; owing no man a shilling, and so easily and pleasantly earning a good name, and being mightily trumped up for doing it.

I shall go on being called a respectable man; and I shall grin and smile at the lie, and show a satin cheek to the world, as if the lie was true as gospel truth. And then I shall die and be buried with feathers: and Mrs. Capstick will put a stone over me—I know her pride, Jem; I know she 'll do it—a stone with a bouncing flam upon it; all lies—lies to the last. Oh, Jem," cried Capstick, groaningly, "if the devil ever takes churchyard walks, how he must chuckle and rub his brimstone hands, when he reads some of the tombstones! Eh? How he must hold his sides at the 'loving husbands,' 'affectionate fathers,' 'faithful friends,' and 'pious Christians,' that he sees advertised there! For *he* knows better, Jem; eh? *He* knows better," cried the muffin-maker with increasing bitterness.

"Well," said Jem, "I can't say; who can? But I should hope the devil knows nothing at all about the matter. Howsomever, be that as it may, he has nothing to do with the business that 's brought us out to-night."

"I wish he hadn't, Jem,—I wish he hadn't," cried Capstick, with stifled emotion. "But here, walking as we are, down this blessed Fleet-street—oh, lord! doesn't it seem strange after what we 've just left, to see the sight about us?—walking here, do you think the devil isn't pointing his finger at me, and saying with a grin to one of his imps, 'There goes the respectable muffin-maker that 's sold a boy's blood for ten pounds.'"

"How can you talk in that way?" said Jem: "the devil 's the father of lies, and only keeps up his character if he says so."

"Not a bit; it 's the devil that speaks truth of our lies; that turns us inside out, and shames sanctified faces with the black hearts that were under 'em. I say, I have sold the boy—put the rope about his neck. And for what? for ten pounds. What a fine fellow I thought myself when I stirred in the matter! What a lump of virtue—what a wonderful bit of public spirit I thought I was, when, day after day, I neglected my muffins and the partner of my hearthstone, to go thief-catching. And I believed I was doing a fine thing—and so, you know I did, I crowed and cackled about the ends of justice. All a sham—all a brave flashy cloak to hide a rascal dirtiness. It was the thoughts of the ten guineas, Jem, the ten guineas, that called all the poison out of my heart, and has made me hang a wretched, untaught beggar-boy. Yes, I 'm a pretty respectable scoundrel—a fine public-spirited miscreant, I am."

Bright Jem, used to the muffin-maker's humour, made no further answer to this self-reproach; but again urged the necessity of consulting Tangle. "It can't be done to-night—but we 'll at him the first thing to-morrow," said Capstick.

"To-morrow 's Sunday," said Jem.

"What of that?" asked Capstick. "People come into the world on Sundays, so it can't be unlawful to help to save 'em from going out of it—look there, Jem," and Capstick pointed to a carriage rolling rapidly past.

"That 's the Marquess's—come from the trial. There 's young St. James in it; well, he 's going to better comfort than a stone cell. Howsomever, he 's a fine fellow—a kind, good heart is in that little chap, I 'm sure of it. How nicely he give his evidence, didn't he? And how kindly he seemed to look at St. Giles in the dock; as much as to say, 'Poor fellow, I wish I could get you out o' that!' He 'll make a true man, that boy will," said Jem; and then he mournfully added, "and so would poor St. Giles. Ha! if when Susan brought him home out o' the snow, if he and young St. James had been made to change berths, eh? There 'd have been a different account of both of 'em, I should think. And yet you see how the poor 's treated; just as if they come into the world with wickedness upon 'em; a kind of human natur vermin—things born to do all sorts of mischief, and then to be hung up for doing it."

"We 'll go to Tangle to-morrow—early to-morrow," said Capstick; who, buried in his compunctions grief, had given no ear to the reflections of Jem. "Good night; early to-morrow." And the muffin-maker suddenly broke from his companion, and strided home—a miserable home to him, whose acute sensibility reproached him as unworthy of the household comforts about him. He looked upon the part he had taken with intense remorse. The would-be misanthrope loathed himself for what he deemed his selfishness of heart—his cruelty towards wretchedness and ignorance. Within a few steps of his door, he paused to call up—with all the power he had—a look of serenity, of decent composure. Somehow, he felt uneasy at the thoughts of meeting his wife. At length he prepared himself, and, with a tolerably successful face of tranquillity, crossed his threshold. He exchanged but one look with his wife; it was enough: it was plain she knew the fate of St. Giles. How should it be otherwise? A score of neighbours, customers, had thronged the shop with the mortal intelligence; and some ventured to hope that Mr. Capstick wouldn't sleep the worse for his day's work—others begged to ask if the muffin-maker thought the hanging of a poor child would bring a blessing on him—and some hinted an opinion that those who were so sharp after evil-doers had commonly not the cleanest consciences themselves. These interrogatives and inuendos had to be severally answered and warded by the muffin-maker's wife, who, to give her due credit, was not slow at any kind of reply.

and was truly a very respectable mistress "of fence." Nevertheless, the exercise would heat a temper never prone to coldness, and in the present instance raised to boiling heat, by what she deemed the malice of her neighbours. And yet, it would have made Capstick's conjugal heart glad again, had he heard how eloquently, how magnificently his acts were defended by his wife: for Mrs. Capstick most volubly and vehemently begged to assure her neighbours, "that there was not a man in the parish fit to wipe her husband's shoes,"—"that he was only wrong in being too honest,"—"that a better soul, or kinder-hearted creature, never walked,"—and that, in short, in the depth of her charity, she "only wished that those who spoke a word against him had half such a husband: the neighbourhood would be all the quieter for it, that 's what she knew, if they had." All this did honour to Mrs. Capstick, and would doubtless have solaced the wounded bosom of her lord, could he only have known it; but Mrs. Capstick had too much humility to vaunt her own virtues, therefore she breathed no word of the matter to her well-defended husband. Not that, the shop being closed, and the wedded couple seated at the fireside, Mrs. Capstick was silent; certainly not; for, whilst the muffin-maker tried to solace himself with a pipe, his wife thus declared herself:—

"Well, Mr. Capstick, now I hope you 're satisfied? I hope you 've made a nice day's work of it! A pretty name you 've got in the parish! There 'll be no living here—*I* 'll not live here, I can tell you. All the world will point at you, and say, 'There goes the man that hanged that wretched little child!'"

Capstick suddenly took the pipe from his mouth, and stared at his wife. It was strange: he had himself said something of the kind to Bright Jem. He then renewed his smoking, speaking no syllable in answer to his spouse; and yet eloquently replying to her philippics by pooh-poohing the smoke from him, now in short, hasty, irascible puffs, and now in a heavy volume of vapour. There was a majesty in his manner that seemed to quietly defy the assaults of his better moiety. There seemed, too, to be no getting at him for the clouds in which he industriously involved himself.

"And I should like to know what your satisfaction will be for what you 've done! Why, you 'll never have another happy moment; you can't have! That poor child will always be before your eyes. And, then, what a beautiful business you 'll lose; for nobody will deal with you. Ha! nice airs the Gibbses will give themselves, now." (The Gibbses, be it known, were new-come muffin-makers, struggling in hopeless rivalry with the muffins of Capstick.) "Everybody will go to them: I 'm sure I don't think

'twill be any use our opening the shop on Monday. And all about ten guineas! Ha, they 'll be a dear ten guineas to you—better have lost 'em ten times over. And so young a child—only fourteen! To hang him! Don't you think, Mr. Capstick, his ghost will follow you?"

Capstick made no answer; but his eye, turned ominously upon his wife, began to glow like a coal, and he puffed at the smoke like a man labouring with himself. Beautiful philosophy! Full soon the muffin-maker's eye shone with its old tranquil light, and again he smoked calmly—desperately calmly. Still Mrs. Capstick continued the punishment of her tongue; but Capstick had conquered himself, and still replied not. At length in the very heat and fullest pitch of her complaint, Capstick rose, and softly laying down his pipe, said, "Mary Anne, I 'm going to bed." Poor Capstick! He came home with his heart bleeding; and a little tenderness, a little conjugal sympathy, would have been a value to him; but—as people say of greater matters—it was not to be.

Capstick rose early; and, speedily joined by Bright Jem, both took their way to Mr. Tangle's private mansion, Red Lion Square. It was scarcely nine o'clock, when the muffin-maker knocked at the lawyer's door. It was quite impossible that Mr. Tangle should be seen. "But the business," cried Capstick to the man-servant—a hybrid between a groom and a footman—"the business is upon life and death."

"Bless you," said the man, "that makes no difference whatever. We deal so much in life and death, that we think nothing of it. It 's like plums to a grocer, you know. Mr. Tangle never can be seen of a Sunday before half-past ten; a quarter to eleven he goes, of course, to church. The Sabbath, he always says, should be a day of rest." And Tangle—it was his only self-indulgence—illustrated this principle by lying late in bed every Sunday morning to read his papers. Nevertheless, with smoothly shaven face, and with an all-unworldly look, he was, ere the church-bell ceased, enshrined in the family pew. There was he, with his wife, decorously garnished with half-a-dozen children, sons and daughters, patterns of Sabbath piety; of seventh-day Christianity. "After six days' hard work, what a comfort it was," he would say, "to enjoy church of a Sunday!" And Tangle, after his fashion, did enjoy it: he enjoyed the respectability which church-going threw about him; he enjoyed his worldly ease and superiority, as manifested in his own cosily-furnished pew. Looking upon the pauper worshippers on the benches, and then contemplating the comforts of his own nook, he felt very proud of his Christianity. And in this way did Mr.

Tangle attend church. It was a decent form due to society, and especially to himself. He went to church as he went to his office —as a matter of business; though he would have been mightily shocked had such a motive been attributed to him.

"I'll come at half-past ten," said Capstick, "for I must see him." The servant looked stolidly at the muffin-maker, and, without a word, closed the door. "He can then tell us," said Capstick to Jem, "when he can see us in the afternoon. And now, Jem, we can only stroll about till the time comes." And so they walked on silently; for both felt oppressed with the belief that their errand to the lawyer would be fruitless; yet both were determined to try every means, however hopeless. They walked and sauntered, and the church-bells rang out, summoning Christian congregations to common worship. "There 's something beautiful in the church-bells, don't you think so, Jem?" asked Capstick, in a subdued tone. "Beautiful and hopeful;—they talk to high and low, rich and poor in the same voice; there 's a sound in 'em that should scare pride, and envy, and meanness of all sorts from the heart of man; that should make him look upon the world with kind, forgiving eyes; that should make the earth itself seem to him, at least for a time, a holy place. Yes, Jem; there 's a whole sermon in the very sound of the church-bells, if we have only the ears to rightly understand it. There 's a preacher in every belfry, Jem, that cries, 'Poor, weary, struggling, fighting creatures—poor human things! take rest, be quiet. Forget your vanities, your follies; your week-day craft, your heart-burnings! And you, ye human vessels, gilt and painted; believe the iron tongue that tells ye, that, for all your gilding, all your colours, ye are of the same Adam's earth with the beggar at your gates. Come away, come, cries the church-bell, and learn to be humble; learning that, however daubed and stained, and stuck about with jewels, you are but grave clay! Come, Dives, come; and be taught that all your glory, as you wear it, is not half so beautiful in the eye of Heaven as the sores of uncomplaining Lazarus! And ye poor creatures, livid and faint—stinted and crushed by the pride and hardness of the world,—come, come, cries the bell, with the voice of an angel, come and learn what is laid up for ye. And learning, take heart, and walk among the wickednesses, the cruelties of the world, calmly as Daniel walked among the lions.'" Here Capstick, flushed and excited, wrought beyond himself, suddenly paused. Jem stared, astonished, but said no word. And then, Capstick, with calmer manner, said, "Jem, is there a finer sight than a stream of human creatures passing from a Christian church?"

"Why," said Jem, "that 's as a man may consider with him-

self. It may be, as you say, a very fine sight—and it may be what I call a very sad and melancholy show, indeed."

"Sad and melancholy!" cried Capstick; "you 'll have a hard task to prove that."

"Perhaps so, only let me do it after my own fashion." Capstick nodded assent. "Bless you! I 've thought of it many a time when I've seen a church emptying itself into the street. Look here, now. I 'll suppose there 's a crowd of people—a whole mob of 'em going down the church-steps. And at the church-door, there is I don't know how many roods of Christian carriages, with griffins painted on the panels, and swords, and daggers, and battle-axes, that, as well as I can remember, Jesus doesn't recommend nowhere: and there's the coachmen, half-asleep, and trying to look religious; and there 's footmen following some and carrying the Holy Bible after their misusses, just as to-morrow they 'll carry a spaniel,—and that 's what they call *their* humility. Well, that 's a pleasant sight, isn't it? And then for them who 're not ashamed to carry their own big prayer-books, with the gold leaves twinkling in the sun, as if they took pains to tell the world they 'd been to church,—well, how many of them have been there in earnest? How many of them go there with no thought whatsoever, only that it 's Sunday,—church-going day? And so they put on what they think religion that day, just as I put on a clean shirt. Bless you! sometimes I 've stood and watched the crowd, and I've said to myself, 'Well, I should like to know how many of you will remember you 're Christians till next week? How many of you go to-morrow morning to your offices, and counting-houses, and stand behind your counters, and, all in the way of business,—all to scramble up the coin—forget you 're miserable sinners, while every other thing you do may make you more miserable, only you never feel it, so long as it makes you more rich? And so there 's a Sunday conscience like a Sunday coat; and folks who 'd get on in the world, put the coat and the conscience carefully by, and only wear 'em once a week. Well, to think how many such folks go to worship,—why, then I must say it, Master Capstick, to stand inside a church and watch a congregation coming out, however you may stare, may be—I can't help, after my fashion, thinking so—a melancholy sight indeed. Lord love you, when we see what some people do all the week,—people who 're staunch at church, remember—I can't help thinking, there 's a good many poor souls who 're only Christians at morning and arternoon service."

Capstick looked earnestly at Jem and said, "My dear fellow, it 's all very well between you and me to say this; but don't say it to the world; don't, Jem, if you wouldn't be hunted, harried, stoned to death, like a mad dog. Folks won't be turned inside

out after this fashion, without revenging the treatment with all sorts of bad names. Very pure folks won't be held up to the light and shown to be very dirty bottles, without paying back hard abuse for the impertinence. Jem, whatever coat a man may wear, never see a hole in it. Though it may be full of holes as a net, never see 'em; but take your hat off to the coat, as if it was the best bit of broad-cloth in the world, without a flaw or a thread dropt, and with the finest bits of gold lace upon it. In this world, Jem, woe to the man with an eye for holes! He's a beast, a wretch, an evil-speaker, an uncharitable thinker, a pest to be put down. And Jem, when the respectable hypocrites make common cause with one another, the Lord help the poor devil they give chase to!"

"I always speak my mind," said Jem.

"It's an extravagance that has ruined many a man," said the muffin-maker. "But enough of this, Jem; it's just the time to catch Tangle before he goes out." A few moments brought them to the lawyer's door. Ere, however, the muffin-maker could touch the knocker, the door opened, and Mr. Tangle, his wife, his two sons and two daughters presented themselves, all, the females especially, being dressed for church. Yes; dressed for church; carefully, elaborately arrayed and ornamented, to sustain the severest criticism that, during the hours of devotion, might be passed upon them by sister sinners.

"Mr. Tangle," said Capstick, "I won't keep you a minute: but when can I call on——"

"Nothing secular to-day, sir," said Tangle, and he waved both his hands.

"But, Mr. Tangle, there's life and death, sir,"—cried Capstick, but Tangle interrupted him.

"What's life and death, sir? What are they, sir, that we should do anything secular to-day?"

"But, Mr. Tangle, it's the fate of that poor wretched boy; and there isn't a minute to lose," urged the muffin-maker.

"I shall be very glad to see you in the way of business, to-morrow," replied Tangle, labouring to appear very placid; "but I beg of you, my good man, not to disturb the current of my thoughts—of my Sabbath feelings—with anything secular to-day. To me the world is dead on Sundays."

"But won't you do good on Sundays?" cried Capstick.—"Your religion doesn't forbid that, I suppose?"

"My good man, let me have none of your free-thinking ribaldry here. This is my door-step, and don't defile my threshold with your profanity. I have given you my answer. Nothing secular to-day." Saying this with increased vehemence, Mr. Tangle was

bustling from the door after his family—who, looking wondering looks at Capstick and Jem, had walked statelily on,—when a carriage rapidly turned the square, and in a moment stopped at Tangle's door. Instantly, Mr. Tangle brought himself up; and cast, certainly, a look of secular curiosity towards the carriage-windows. In an instant, young Lord St. James alighted, and was followed by his tutor—worn somewhat since we last met him—Mr. Folder. Mr. Tangle immediately recognised the young nobleman, and although it was Sunday, advanced towards him with pains-taking respect. "Your wife told us you were come here, Mr. Capstick," said his lordship to the muffin-maker.

"Pray, sir, can we consult you upon a business that is somewhat urgent?" said Folder to the attorney.

"Certainly, sir; anything for his lordship. Excuse me one moment;" and Tangle, with unwonted agility, skipped after his wife and family. They must go to church without him. A lord, a young lord, had called upon him—that sweet young gentleman in the sky-blue coat and lace-collar—and, the business was imminent. He, the husband and father, would join them as soon as he could. With many backward, admiring looks at the lovely little nobleman, did Mr. Tangle's family proceed on their way to church, whilst Tangle—the groaning victim to secular affairs—ushered young St. James and Mr. Folder into his mansion. "We can do nothing without you," said St. James to Capstick and Bright Jem; who thereupon gladly followed, the attorney marvelling at the familiarity of the boy nobleman.

"What can I have the honour to do for his lordship?" asked Mr. Tangle, with a smile dirt cheap at six and eight-pence.

"We should not have troubled you to-day," said St. James, "only you see——"

"Don't name it, my dear young lord!" exclaimed Tangle.

"Only," chimed in Mr. Folder, "they talk about hanging on Wednesday."

"Very true," said Tangle; "I believe the affair comes off on Wednesday. A great pity, sir! Quite a child, sir; and with good parts—very good parts. Nevertheless, sir, the crime of horse-stealing increases hourly; and without some example is made, some strong example is made——"

"Why, they hanged four for horse-stealing last sessions," said Capstick.

Tangle looked round with astonishment at the interruption, and then observed—"That only proves they don't hang enough."

"My opinion, Mr. Tangle; quite my opinion. We want stronger laws, sir; much stronger. If we were to hang for everything, there 'd be an end of crime altogether. It 's because

we only punish by halves—now hanging one, and now another—that we have such a continual growth of vice. We ought to pull up crime by the roots; now our present pruning system makes it flourish the stronger. However, his young lordship doesn't think so. He has all the generosity of youth, and insists that St. Giles shall not be hanged."

"God bless him!" cried Capstick.

"Amen!" said Bright Jem.

"I must request that we have no interruption," said Tangle, looking loftily at the two offenders. "Perhaps, sir," and the lawyer turned to Folder, "perhaps, you will state your case."

"Just a word in private," said Folder; and Tangle immediately led him into a small adjoining room, and closed the door. "You see, Mr. Tangle," said Folder, "I consider this to be a very foolish, weak business; but the young gentleman is a spoilt child, and spoilt children will have their way. In one word, his lordship must be humoured, and therefore St. Giles—though it would be much better for him to be put at once quietly out of further mischief—must not be hanged. The Marquess has his own notions on the matter; proper notions, too, they are, Mr. Tangle; notions that do honour to him as a legislator, and would, I verily believe, let the law take its course. But, poor man! what can he do?"

"Do what he likes, can't he?" asked Tangle.

"By no means. You see, it is with the boy as it was with the boy Themistocles," said Mr. Folder.

"Really?" observed Tangle.

"One of Plutarch's own parallels. The boy rules the Marchioness, and the Marchioness rules——"

"I understand," said Tangle: "rules the Marquess. It will happen so."

"And therefore, the sum and end of it all is, the horse-stealer must be saved. Bless you! his young lordship has threatened to fall sick and die, if St. Giles is hanged; and has so frightened his poor mother, who again has made the Marquess so anxious, that—the fact is, we 've come to you."

"It 's a great pity that I didn't know all this before. The case, my dear sir, was a nothing—a very trumpery case, indeed; but then, to a man of my extensive practice, it was really not worth attending to. Otherwise, and to have obliged the Marquess, I could have made sure of an *alibi*. It 's a great pity that so noble a family should be so troubled, and by such riff-raff!" said Tangle.

"It is, sir; it is," said Folder—"you can feel for us. Now, there 's no doubt that, in so trifling a matter, the Marquess has

more than sufficient interest to save a thief or two; nevertheless, I have suggested that a petition should be got up by the boy's friends—if the wicked creature has any friends—and that so the Marquess—you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Tangle: what would he not understand in such a case? "There is nothing more easy than a petition. How many signatures would you like to it? Any number—though fifty will be as good as five hundred."

"Do you think the jury would sign?" asked Mr. Folder. "Not that it 's of any consequence; only for the look of the thing."

"The foreman, I know, would not," said Tangle. "He lost a colt himself three years ago, and isn't yet settled to the injury. Nevertheless, we can get up a very tidy sort of petition; and with the Marquess's interest—well! that young St. Giles is a lucky little scoundrel! he 'll make his fortune at Botany Bay."

"And now, Mr. Tangle, that we understand one another, we 'll join, if you please, his lordship.—Well, my lord," said Folder, returning, "I have talked the matter over with Mr. Tangle, and, though he gives very little hope——"

"There 's all the hope in the world," said Capstick, "for his lordship says he 'll take the petition himself to the Minister, who 's his father's friend, and, if I may advise the Marchioness, his mother——"

"My good man," observed Mr. Folder, "we in no way need your advice in the matter. Hold your tongue."

"Shouldn't mind at all obliging you, sir, in any other way," said the unruffled Capstick; "but, as his young lordship here, as he tells me, has been to my shop and all to see me about the matter, I think my tongue 's quite at his service."

"To be sure it is, Capstick," said young St. James, "go on. Mr. Folder says they 'd better hang St. Giles; and papa says so too; but they sha'n't do it for all that. Why, I should never have the heart to mount a horse again."

"A noble little chap!" whispered Bright Jem to Capstick.

"And so, as I told you, Capstick, I went to your house, as you know all about the boy, and the boy's friend, to see about a petition; for that 's the way, they tell me——"

"Give yourself no further trouble," said Tangle, "the petition shall be prepared, my lord. I 'll do it myself, this very day, though the affair is secular. Nevertheless, to oblige your lordship——"

"Your 're a good fellow," said young St. James, patronising the lawyer; and, all preliminaries being settled, the conference concluded.

CHAPTER X.

And young St. Giles lay in Newgate, sinking, withering under sentence of death. After a time, he never cried, or clamoured; he shed no tear, breathed no syllable of despair; but, stunned, stupified, seemed as if idiotcy was growing on him. The ordinary—a good, zealous man—endeavoured, by soothing, hopeful words, to lead the prisoner, as the jail phrase has it, to a sense of his condition. Never had St. Giles received such teaching! Condemned to die, he for the first time heard of the abounding love of Christianity—of the goodness and affection due from man to man. The story seemed odd to him; strange, very strange; yet he supposed it was all true. Nevertheless—he could not dismiss the thought, it puzzled him. Why had he never been taught all this before? And why should he be punished, hanged for doing wrong; when the good, rich, fine people, who all of them loved their neighbours like themselves, had never taught him what was right? Was it possible that Christianity was such a beautiful thing—and being so, was it possible that good, earnest, kind-hearted Christians would kill him?

St. Giles had scarcely eight-and-forty hours to live. It was almost Monday noon, when the ordinary—having attended the other prisoners—entered the cell of the boy thief. He had been separated, by the desire of the minister, from his miserable companions, that their evil example of hardihood—their reckless bravado—might not wholly destroy the hope of growing truth within him. A turnkey attended St. Giles, reading to him. And now the boy would raise his sullen eyes upon the man, as he read of promises of grace and happiness eternal: and now his heart would heave as though he was struggling with an agony that seemed to suffocate him—and now a scornful, unbelieving smile would play about his mouth—and he would laugh with defying bitterness. And then he would leer in the face of the reader, as though he read some fairy tale, some pretty story, to amuse and gull him. Poor wretch! Let the men who guide the world—the large-brained politicians, who tinker the social scheme, making themselves the masters and guardians of their fellow-men—let them look into this Newgate dungeon; let them contemplate this blighted human bud; this child felon, never taught the path of right, and now to be hanged for his most

sinful ignorance. What a wretched, sullen outcast! What a darkened, loathsome thing! And now comes the clergyman—the state divine, be it remembered—to tell him that he is treasured with an immortal soul; that—with mercy shed upon him—he will in a few hours be a creature of glory before the throne of God! Oh, politicians! Oh, rulers of the world! Oh, law-making masters and taskers of the common million, may not this cast-off wretch, this human nuisance, be your accuser at the bar of Heaven? Egregious folly! Impossible! What—stars and garters impeached by rags and tatters! St. James denounced by St. Giles! Impudent and ridiculous! Yet here, we say, comes the reverend priest—the Christian preacher, with healing, honied words, whose Book—*your* Book—with angelic utterance, says no less. Let us hear the clergyman and his forlorn pupil.

"Well, my poor boy," said the ordinary, with an affectionate voice and moistening eyes: "well, my child, and how is it with you? Come, you are better; you look better; you have been listening to what your good friend Robert here has been reading to you. And we are all your friends, here. At least, we all want to be. Don't you think so?"

St. Giles slowly lifted his eyes towards the speaker. He then sullenly answered,—"No, I don't."

"But you ought to try to think so, my boy; it 's wicked not to try," said the ordinary, very tenderly.

"If you 're all my friends, why do you keep me here?" said St. Giles. "Friends! I never had no friends."

"You must not say that; indeed, you must not. All our care is to make you quiet and happy in this world, that you may be happier in the world you 're going to. You understand me, St. Giles? My poor dear boy, you understand me? The world you 're going to?" The speaker, inured as he was to scenes of blasphemy, of brute indifference, and remorseful agony, was deeply touched by the forlorn condition of the boy; who could not, would not, understand a tenderness, the end of which was to surrender him softened to the hangman. "You have thought, my dear—I say, you have thought of the world"—and the minister paused—"the world you are going to?"

"What 's the use of thinking about it?" asked St. Giles. "I knows nothing of it."

"That, my boy, is because you are obstinate, and I am sorry to say it, wicked, and so won't try to know about it. Otherwise, if you would give all your heart and soul to prayer,——"

"I tell you, sir, I never was learnt to pray," cried St. Giles, moodily; and what 's the use of praying?"

"You would find it open your heart, St. Giles; and though

you see nothing now, if you were only to pray long and truly, you would find the darkness go away from your eyes, and you 'd see such bright and beautiful things about you, and you 'd feel as light and happy as if you had wings at your back ; you would, indeed. Then you 'd feel that all we are doing for you is for the best ; then, my poor boy," said the ordinary with growing fervour, "then you 'd feel what Christian love is."

"Robert 's been reading to me about that," said St. Giles, "but I can't make it out no-how. He says that Christian love means that we shouldn't do to nobody what we wouldn't like nobody to do to ourselves."

"A good boy," said the ordinary, "that is the meaning, though not the words. I 'm glad you 've so improved."

"And for all that, you tell me that I must think o' dying—think of another world and all that—think of going to Tyburn, and, and "—here the boy fell hoarse ; his face turned ash-colour, and reeling, he was about to fall, when the ordinary caught him in his arms, and again placed him on a seat. "It 's nothin'—nothin' at all," cried St. Giles, struggling with himself—"I 'm all right ; I 'm game."

"Don't say that, child ; I can't hear you say that : I would rather see you in tears and pain than trying to be game, as you call it. That, my boy, is only adding crime to wickedness. Come, we were talking of Christian love," said the ordinary.

"I know nothin' about it," said St. Giles ; "all I know is this,—it isn't true ; it can't be true "

"Tell me ; why not ? Come, let me hear all you 'd say," urged the clergyman tenderly.

"'Cause if it means that nobody should do to nobody what nobody would like to have done to themselves, why does anybody keep me locked up here ? Why did the judge say I was to be—you know, Mister ? "

"That was for doing wrong, my boy : that was for your first want of Christian love. You were no Christian when you stole the horse," said the ordinary. "Had the horse been yours, you would have felt wronged and injured had it been stolen from you ? You see that, eh, my boy ? "

"Didn't think o' that," said St. Giles gloomily—"But I didn't steal it : 'twas all along o' Tom Blast ; and now he 's got off ; and I 'm here in the Jug. You don't call that justice, no how, do you ? But I don't care ; they may do what they like with me ; I 'll be game."

"No, my dear boy, you must know better : you must, indeed—you must give all your thoughts to prayer, and——"

"It 's of no use, Mister ; I tell you I never was learnt to pray,

and I don't know how to go about it. More than that, I feel somehow ashamed to do it. And besides, for all your talk, Mister, and you talk very kind to me, I must say, I can't feel like a Christian, as you call it; for I can't see why Christians should want to hang me if Christians are such good people as you talk about."

"But then, my poor boy," said the ordinary, "though young, you must remember, you're an old sinner. You've done much wickedness."

"I never done nothing but what I was taught; and if you say—and Bob there's been reading it to me—that the true Christian forgives every body—well then, in course, the judge and all the nobs are no Christians, else wouldn't they forgive me? Wouldn't they like it so, to teach me better, and not to kill me? But I don't mind; I'll be game; see if I don't be game—precious!"

The ordinary, with a perplexed look, sighed deeply. The sad condition of the boy, the horrid death awaiting him, the natural shrewdness with which he combated the arguments employed for his conversion, affected the worthy clergyman beyond all past experience. "Miserable little wretch!" he thought, "it will be worst of murders, if he dies thus." And then, again, he essayed to soften the child felon, who seemed determined to stand at issue with his spiritual counsellor; to recede no step, but to the gallows foot to defy him. It would be his ambition, his glory—if he must die—to die game. He had heard the praises bestowed upon such a death—had known the contemptuous jeering flung upon the repentant craven—and *he* would be the theme of eulogy in Hog Lane—*he* would not be laughed, sneered at for "dying dunghill." And this temper so grew and strengthened in St. Giles, that, at length, the ordinary, wearied and hopeless, left his forlorn charge, promising soon to return, and hoping, in his own words, to find the prisoner "a kinder, better, and more Christian boy."

"It's no use your reading that stuff to me," said St. Giles, as the turnkey was about to resume his book; "I don't understand nothin' of it; and it's too late to learn. But I say, can't you tell us somethin' of Turpin and Jack Sheppard, eh,—something prime, to give us pluck?"

"Come, come," answered the man, "it's no use going on in this way. You must be quiet and listen to me; it's all for your good, I tell you: all for your good."

"My good! Well, that's pretty gammon, that is. I should like to know what can be for my good if I'm to be hanged? Ha! ha! See if I don't kick my shoes off, that's all." And St. Giles would *not* listen; but sat on the stool, swinging his legs back-

wards and forwards, and singing one of the melodies known in Hog Lane—poor wretch! it had been a cradle melody to him,—whilst the turnkey vainly endeavoured to soothe and interest him. At length the man discontinued his hopeless task; and, in sheer listlessness, leaning his back against the wall, fell asleep. And now St. Giles was left alone. And now, relieved of importunity, did he forego the bravado that had supported him, and solemnly think of his approaching end? Did he, with none other but the eye of God in that stone cell upon him, did he shrink and wither beneath the look; and, on bended knees, with opened heart, and flowing, repentant tears, did he pray for Heaven's compassion—God's sweet mercy? No. Yet thoughts, deep, anxious thoughts were brooding in his heart. His face grew older with the meditation that shadowed it. All his being seemed compressed, intensified in one idea. Gloomily, yet with whetted eyes, he looked around his cell; and still darker and darker grew his face. Could he break prison? Such was the question—the foolish, idle, yet flattering question that his soul put to itself. All his recollections of the glory of Turpin and Sheppard crowded upon him—and what greater glory would it be for him if he could escape! He, a boy to do this! He to be sung in ballads—to be talked of, huzzaed, and held up for high example, long after he should be dead—passed for ever from the world! The proud thought glowed within him, made his heart heave, and his eyes sparkle. And then he looked about his cell, and the utter hopelessness of the thought fell upon him, withering his heart. Yet again and again, although to be crushed with new despair, he gazed about him, dreaming of liberty without that wall of flint. And thus his waking hours passed; and thus, in the visions of the night, his spirit busied itself in hopeful vanity.

The Tuesday morning came, and again the clergyman visited the prisoner. The boy looked paler, thinner—no more. There was no softness in his eyes, no appealing glance of hope: but a fixed and stubborn look of inquiry. "He didn't know nothing of what the parson had to say, and he didn't want to be bothered. It was all gammon!" These were the words of the boy felon, then—such was the humanity of the law; poor law! what a long nonage of discretion has it passed!—then within a day's span of the grave.

As the hour of death approached, the clergyman became more assiduous, fervent, nay passionate in his appeals to the prisoner; who still strengthened himself in opposition to his pastor. "My dear boy,—my poor child—miserable, helpless creature!—the grave is open before you—the sky is opening above you!—Die without repentance, and you will pass into the grave, and never

—never know immortal blessings! Your soul will perish—perish as I have told you—in fire, in fire eternal!"

St. Giles swayed his head to and fro, and with a sneer asked, "What 's the good o' all this? Haven't you told me so, Mister, agin and agin?"

The ordinary groaned almost in despair, yet still renewed his task. "The heavens, I tell you, are opening for you; repent, my child; repent, poor boy, and you will be an immortal spirit, welcomed by millions of angels."

St. Giles looked with bitter incredulity at his spiritual teacher. "Well, if all that 's true," he said, "it isn't so hard to be hanged, arter all. But I don't think the nobs love me so well, as to send me to sich a place as that."

"Nay, my poor boy," said the ordinary, "you will not, cannot, understand me, until you pray. Now, kneel, my dear child, kneel, and let us pray together." Saying this, the ordinary fell upon his knees; but St. Giles, folding his arms, so planted himself as to take firmer root of the ground; and so he stood with moody, determined looks, whilst the clergyman poured forth a passionate prayer that the heart of the young sinner might be softened; that it might be turned from stone into flesh, and become a grateful sacrifice to the throne of God. And whilst this prayer, in deep and solemn tones, rose from the prison-cell, he for whom the prayer was formed, seemed to grow harder, more obdurate, with every syllable. Still, he refused to bend his knee at the supplication of the clergyman, but stood eyeing him with a mingled look of incredulity, defiance, and contempt. "God help you, poor lost lamb!" cried the ordinary, as he rose.

"Now, I hope we shall have no more o' that," was the only answer of St. Giles.

The ordinary was about to quit the cell, when the door was opened, and the governor of the jail, attended by the head turnkey, entered. "My dear sir, I am glad to find you here,"—said the governor to the ordinary. "I have a pleasing duty to perform; a duty that I know it will delight you to witness." The ordinary glanced at a paper held by the governor; his eyes brightened; and clasping his hands, he fervently uttered—"Thank God!"

The governor then turned to St. Giles, who suddenly looked anxious and restless. "Prisoner," he said, "it is my happiness to inform you, that his gracious Majesty has been mercifully pleased to spare your life. You will not suffer with the unfortunate men to-morrow. You understand me, boy"—for St. Giles looked suddenly stupified—"you understand me, that the good king,

whom you should ever pray for, has, in the hope that you will turn from the wickedness of your ways, determined to spare your life? You will be sent out of the country; and time given you that, if you properly use it, will make you a good and honest man."

St. Giles made no answer, but trembled violently from head to foot. Then his face flushed red as flame, and covering it with his hands, he fell upon his knees; and the tears ran streaming through his fingers. "Pray with me; pray for me!" he cried, in broken voice, to the ordinary.

And the ordinary knelt, and rendered up "humble and hearty thanks" for the mercy of the king.

We will not linger in the prison—St. Giles was destined for Botany Bay. Mr. Capstick was delighted, in his own way, that the ends of justice would be satisfied; and whilst he rejoiced with the triumph of justice, he did not forget the evil-doer; for St. Giles received a packet from the muffin-maker, containing sundry little comforts for his voyage.

"We shall never see him again, Jem," said Mrs. Aniseed, as she left Newgate weeping; having taken her farewell of the young transport. "He's gone for ever from us."

"Not he," said Bright Jem; "we shall see him again another feller quite—a true man, yet; I'm sure of it."

CHAPTER XI.

Some nine years had passed since young St. Giles—the fortunate object of royal mercy—was sent from England a doomed slave for life. For life! Hope, so far as man can kill it in the heart of his fellow, was dead to the convict. He had sinned against the law, and its offended majesty—for such was and is the phrase—denied to the offender the reward of better conduct. Man, in the loftiness of his own pure thoughts, in the besetting consciousness of his own immaculate worth, deems his criminal brother incapable of future good, and therefore considers only the best security of the machine; how the bones and muscles, the brute strength of the engine may be withheld from further mischief. It matters little to the guardian of the laws, to the maker of statutes for the protection of property, what aggravated demon, what pining, penitent spirit, yearning for better thoughts, may dwell within the felon, so that the chain at his leg be of sufficient weight and hindrance. How very recent is it, that many of the

good people of this world did not consider a part of their very goodness to be in their belief of the incorrigibility of the felon! It was to make too familiar an approach to their respectability to suggest the probability of amendment in the doomed thief. It was, in a manner, to hold cheap their honesty, to suppose the virtue attainable by the once wicked. Human arrogance is, assuredly, never so pitiable as when, in the smug belief of its own election, it looks upon its fellow in this world as irrevocably lost. But then, there is a sort of virtue that, not particularly shining in itself, has need of vice to throw it out; just as the lights of Rembrandt owe their lustre to the shadows about them. Considered after this hard fashion—and full well we know the sort of worthy people who will shake their heads at our miserable bitterness—yes, bitterness is the word—there is a kind of respectable man, who, although he may disallow the obligation, is somewhat indebted for his respectability to the proved rascal. The convicted knave is the dark tint to his little speck of yellow white: he is lustrous only by contrast. And after this short, uncharitable essay on black and white, we resume our history; leaving for the present the events of nine years unregistered—nine years from the time that young St. Giles quitted Newgate for the genial clime of Botany Bay.

It was a beautiful spring evening—"last of the spring, yet fresh with all its green." The peace of heaven seemed upon the earth. An hour and scene when the heart is softened and subdued by the spirit of beauty; when the whole visible world seems to us an appointed abiding-place for truth and gentleness; and it is with hard reluctance we believe that tyranny, and woe, and wickedness exist within it. One of the happy hours that, sweet in the present, are yet more delicious in the past; treasured as they are, as somewhat akin to the hours of the world's youth, when the earth was trod by angels.

The broad, fat fields of Kent lay smiling in the sun; the trim hedges, clothed in tender green; the budding oaks, the guardian giants of the soil; the wayside cottage, with garden-strip brimming with flowers; all things wore a look of peace and promise. A young gentleman, soberly habited, and well mounted, rode leisurely along; but, however beautiful the scene around him, it was plain, from the brooding, melancholy expression of his features, that he had no sympathy with the quietude and sweetness of external nature; but was self-concentrated, buried in deep thought. The loosened rein lay on his horse's neck, and the rider, apparently unconscious of all around him, was borne listlessly along, until the road opened into a patch of moor-land, when a second horseman, at a sharp trot, overtook the idle rider.

"A fine night, sir, for a lazy man," said the stranger, in a loud and somewhat familiar tone.

"And why," answered the young gentleman, in a peculiarly soft and gentle voice, "why, sir, for a lazy man?"

"Oh! I mean there 's a sort of dreaminess in the air—a kind of sleepiness, if I may say it, about the night, that, to folks who love to creep about the world with folded arms and half-shut eyes, is the very time for 'em. You know, sir, there are such people," said the man, with a laugh.

"Possibly," replied the younger horseman; who then, with a reserved and dignified motion, urged his steed, as though desirous to quit himself of his new companion. The stranger, however, was not a man to be bowed or looked away. Affecting not to perceive the intention of the youth, he mended his pace, and, quite at his ease, resumed the conversation.

"You are well mounted, sir," he said, casting a learned look at his companion's horse. "Strong, yet lightly built: I doubt not on pressing service, now, she 'd carry double—I mean," added the stranger, with an odd, familiar glance, "I mean with a pillion."

"I can't say," was the calm, cold answer; but the stranger heeded not the rebuff.

"Oh, yes!" he cried; "I would I might have the richest heiress for the carrying her on such horse-flesh: did she weigh twenty thousand weight, your mare would do it. An heiress, or a fair lady who 'd slip her white wrists from a chain that galled her." The young man looked suddenly in the speaker's face, as though to detect some meaning there revealed; but, careless and unabashed, and as though idly giving utterance to idle thoughts, the stranger continued. "There are such poor pining things, sir, if a true knight knew where to find 'em: there are distressed ladies, who, I doubt it not, would trust themselves to the back of your mare, even though, like the flying horse I 've read of, she took 'em to the moon. To be sure," said the stranger, with a slight chuckle, "the moon, for what I know, would be the fittest place for 'em. That 's a strange nook, sir, isn't it?" and the man pointed to a small, oddly-fashioned house, almost buried among high and gloomy trees, about a bow-shot from the road. "A queer place, and a queer master, if all be true of him." At these words, the young man, with a confused look, stooped to pat his horse's neck, saying the meanwhile, "Indeed?—and what is known of the master?"

"Why, there are twenty stories about him; but of course some of 'em can't be true. However, what 's known for fact is, he 's rich as the Indies, and, moreover, he 's got a young wife."

"Is that all?" asked the young man, with affected carelessness. "Is it so rare a matter that a rich old man should buy himself a young helpmate?"

"Humph! Helpmate 's a pretty word, sir; a mighty pretty word; but the help that three-score gets from three-and-twenty, eh? No, sir; money in this marketing world of ours may buy much, but—flighty and frivolous and butterfly-like as the things sometimes are—it can't always buy a woman's heart. However this it *can* purchase; it can buy a cage to put the poor thing in; it can buy eyes to watch her; hands to guard her; and so, old Snipeton may keep his pet-lamb safe from London wolves—safe as his parchments in his strong-box."

"You seem, sir," said the young man, with animated looks, "you seem to know Mr. Snipeton."

"Why, sir," answered the stranger, "I 'm of London training, London habits; have, in my day—indeed who has not?—wanted a few hundreds; and is not Snipeton a man of benevolence—a man of profound heart and deepest money-chest? Is he not ever ready to assist his fellow-creatures at anything above sixty per cent.? Oh, you *must* know Snipeton," said the stranger, with a familiar laugh. "Yes, yes; you *must* know him."

"From what circumstance do you gather such belief?" asked the young man, a little haughtily.

"Why, you live a London life—oh, yes, sir, there 's no country, hawthorn-look about you—you have London wants, and such things will happen to the richest, the lordliest of us; at times the dice *will* go wrong—the devil *will* shuffle the cards—and then, our honour—yes, that 's the fiend's name—our honour, willy-nilly sends us to some such good man as Ebenezer Snipeton. Why, he 's as well known to the bloods of London as Bridewell 's known to the 'prentices."

"And pray, sir," asked the young man, with some effort at carelessness, "pray, do you know the victim—I mean, the usurer's wife?"

"I can't say that," answered the stranger. "And yet, I 've seen her before she wore chains; seen her when she lived with the old man, her father. Ha, sir! that was a bitter business."

"Pray, tell me," said the young man. "I know not wherefore I should care about it, and yet there is an interest in what you say that—I pray, tell me, sir."

"You see, her father was a worn-out, broken merchant. His wife, as I have heard, went wrong, and from that time his head failed him—he grew wild and reckless—losses came thick as hail upon him, and then Snipeton came to his assistance—yes, assistance is what he called it—and bound him round and round with

bills and bonds, and I know not what, and made him all his own. Well, in good time, old Snipeton looked upon the girl—it isn't a new story though a sad and wicked one—and she became the usurer's wife, to save her father from the usurer's fangs. Pity is it that she did so; for the old man died only a few weeks after the wedding that made his child—kind, affectionate thing!—a slave for life. 'Twould be a pretty world, sir, wouldn't it, but for tricks like these,—and they, somehow, take the bloom off it, don't they? Eh, sir? Good night, sir;" and then the stranger suddenly clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped onward. Following a bend of the road, he was in a few minutes out of sight; upon which our solitary traveller, evidently relieved of an irksome companion, turned his steed, and slowly retraced his way. He again relapsed into thought—again suffered his horse to wander at its own will onward. Thus absorbed he had proceeded a short distance when his eye fell upon a miserable man, seated on a mile-stone. He was in rags and almost bare-foot, and there was the sharp spirit of want in his features, that told a tale of many sufferings. He spoke not—made no gesture of supplication—but looked with idle, glazing eye upon the earth. This object of desolation—this poor tatterdemalion wretch—suddenly smote our traveller into consciousness; and with a kind compassionate voice, he accosted him. "My poor fellow, you seem in no plight for travel."

"Bad enough, sir," said the man, "bad enough; yet hardly as bad as I wish it was."

"Indeed! A strange wish! Why, I take it, human strength could scarcely bear a heavier load of wretchedness."

"I wish it couldn't bear it," said the man; "I'm tired of it—heart-tired, and could lay down my life as willingly as a pack."

"Where do you come from?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, sir! a long way from here—a long way; and why I came I know not: I was a restless fool, and might have died where I was."

"And where are your friends?" questioned the traveller.

"God only knows," said the man, with a heavy groan; "I don't."

"Poor fellow! but hope for better times," said the traveller; and at the same moment, throwing him a crown-piece, the youth rode briskly on.

And thus unknown to one another did St. Giles and St. James again meet. Again was St. Giles an outcast, hiding from the law; for he had escaped from his far-off place of bondage, and yearning for England, for the lovely land in which he had no rightful footstep, in whose abounding wealth he had not the

interest of a farthing; he had dared death and peril in many shapes, and hunger and all variety of misery, to stand once more upon his native soil. He knew that, if discovered, the hangman would claim him as lawful prey; he knew that he must hide and slink through life in the mere hope of holding life's poor mockery; and yet, he had slipped his chains, had suffered the misery of a thousand deaths, that he might once again behold an English sky, once again tread English earth! Poor wretch! how soon did hard reality disenchant him. How few the days he had passed in England, yet how many the terrors that had encompassed him! The land that in his dreams of bondage had seemed to him a Paradise; the very men who in his hopeful visions had promised gentleness and protection; all was changed. The earth, lovely and fruitful to happy eyes, to him seemed cursed; and all men, to his thought, looked at him with denouncing looks. With a crushed heart, and in the very recklessness of despair, he would again have welcomed the chains he had broken. Again and again too, could he have stretched himself upon the earth as upon a bed, and rendered up his tired and hopeless spirit to his God. And then fierce thoughts of vengeance on the world's injustice would possess him; then he would deem himself as one sent upon the earth, missioned for mischief; a mere wretch of prey, to live by wrong and violence. And thus, with the demon rising in his breast, was he brooding, when St. James accosted him. But when the young man, the child of fortune, soothed the poor outcast with gentle words and timely relief, the sullen, desperate wretch became on the instant penitent and softened; and his touched heart felt there was goodness still in man, and beauty in the world. The thoughts of life came back to him in healthful strength; for his jaded spirit had drunk at the fountain of hope. In the fervour of his gratitude, he felt not that, in a day or two at most, the sun might see the misery of the past hour again upon him. It was enough that he had the means of present comfort; that he could quench the fire of hunger; that he could rest his travel-worn body. With this glad assurance he cast about his thoughts for a place of refuge. He knew not the road; knew not what offered as he advanced; but he remembered that he had passed a house a little more than a mile back, and retracing his steps, he would there seek refuge for the night. Though his heart was lightened, he walked with difficulty, and the evening closed in rapidly about his path. It was a calm and beautiful night, and the clear moon rose like a spirit in heaven. Suddenly St. Giles was startled by the sound of horses' feet; in an instant the animal, bearing a rider whose outline was but for a moment visible, at its fullest speed passed him; a minute, and the sound

of hoofs died in the distance. There was something strange in such haste; something that fell upon St. Giles with a sense of evil done. For a time he paused, asking counsel of himself; and then his sinking vitals, his worn and wearied body, claimed his instant exertion, and again he pressed onward. In half-an-hour he arrived at the wished for house. Lights shone in the windows; there was dancing, and the voice of village harmony was loud within. Wherefore, then, did St. Giles pause at the very threshold? Wherefore, then, did his knees feel weak, and his very heart sink numbed and dead, as he saw the cheerful light, and heard human voices clamouring their happiness? Wherefore should he not join the merry-makers? Alas! was there not convict written in his haggard cheeks—felon branded on his brow? Would he not, with a howl of triumph, be set upon by his fellow-men, and, like a wild beast escaped from a cage, be carried back to jail? His brain swam with the thought, and he almost fell to the earth. "Why, what 's the matter, mate?" said a countryman, noting St. Giles's hesitation. "Why don't thee step in? There be plenty of room, if thee have the cash, though it be crowded a plenty."

"Thank 'ee; I was a going in," said St. Giles; and with sudden resolution he entered the house. Happily for him, he thought, the place was thronged. A village-ball was held upstairs, and the house throbbed and rocked beneath the vigorous feet of the dancers. The resources of the neighbourhood, however, had supplied one fiddle, and the musician, the village tailor, touched by Phœbus, generously accommodated his instrument to the distant keys and many variations of the singers. Shortly after St. Giles entered, the ears of the company were engaged by the patriotic strains of the barber of the hamlet, who, with vigour and taste happily mingled, celebrated in good strong, homely verse the magnanimity, courage, and glory of the British Lion; an animal that has, in its day, had as many fine things written of it as an opera-singer. And as the barber sang, fifty throats joined in chorus, declaratory of the might of the aforesaid British Lion, and evidently claiming a sort of partnership in its greatness. For the time, the British Lion was to them a very intimate relation; and they celebrated its glories as though they had a family interest in them. And St. Giles himself—to his passing astonishment—piped the praises of the British Lion! The outcast vagabond, with fear pulling at his heart, had slid among the company, trembling at every man's eye, as it fell upon him; but soon he had quaffed some ale, he had eaten invigorating bread and cheese, and his heart, suffused and warm, had cast away all coward thought, and in the fulness of its gratitude, in the very

surprise of its happiness, had chirped aloud to the honour of the British Lion; albeit the said Lion, as a very prominent actor in the arms of England—as the typical defender of our hearths and homes, our dearest morals, and sometimes our dearer property—might very justifiably have required the returned convict for its dinner. In very truth, St. Giles was the lawful prey of the defrauded, cheated British Lion; and yet St. Giles, in the ignorance of his happiness, sang to the praises of the Lion as though the royal beast had been to him his best friend. But then St. Giles sang as a patriot, though in his heart and soul he might feel no better than a felon. Wicked, hypocritic St. Giles! In all history, did ever man, in higher places, too, do the like?

It was well for St. Giles that he had fortified himself with a cup of ale, with a few mouthfuls of food, ere the maiden who attended to the wants of the visitors, asked him for the requiting coin. Otherwise St. Giles had felt somewhat abashed to display his wealth; the furniture of his pocket, and his outside chattels in no way harmonising together. The crown-piece would have confused St. Giles; as to eyes sharpened by money—and what a whetstone it is even to dullest vision!—he felt that he in no way looked like a man to be honestly possessed of so much wealth. Either he would have thought the lawful metal of the coin might be questioned; or that difficulty overcome, his rightful claim to it disputed. And then, had he out with the truth, who, he thought, in the narrowness of his heart, would believe him? What! anybody give a beggar a crown-piece? Then, at once, believe the moon coagulated cream, or any other household substance. But, happily, we say, for St. Giles, his heart was suddenly warmed; and, therefore, with a careless, happy air, never suspecting the suspicions of others, he laid his crown-piece in the hand of the attendant nymph, or if you will, bacchante; and she, with all the trustingness and simplicity of her sex, never looked at St. Giles and then at his money as though, it is sometimes done, comparing the face of flesh and the face of metal, to mark if they be worthy of each other; but instantly gave the change, with a blythe "thank 'ee" for the patronage. Presumptuous is man! St. Giles, who, five minutes before, felt himself wretched, terrified at the thought of singing in the taproom of the Lamb and Star, was now made so bold by his happiness, that, his eyes meeting the bright orbs of Becky, full and swimming as they were with satisfaction, and her little plump anatomy swaying to and fro, in kindly sympathy with the dancers up-stairs—St. Giles, we say, in the hardihood of his sudden confidence, laughed and chucked Becky under the chin. And Becky, looking not more than decently ferocious, bounced lightly

round, cried "Well, I'm sure!" and then, as if nothing had happened, attended the call of another customer.

And could St. Giles so soon forget that he was a returned convict, as with slight provocation to chuck the maiden of the Lamb and Star under the chin? But such is the heart of man!

When the clamour of the room was at its highest, a young man sparkishly drest suddenly looked in, and was as suddenly greeted by the merry makers. A loud cheer for "Master Willis" shook the roof-tree. The new-comer was a man of about five-and twenty; of tall and well-knit frame, with large, fresh-coloured features, and a profusion of black hair; the very man to kill village hearts by dozens. He seemed in the highest spirits; indeed, almost unnaturally gay. There was something in his laboured vivacity that might have awakened the attention of a less merry audience; a hollowness in his loud, roaring laugh, that hardly seemed of mirth. But Master Willis was among friends, admirers: he was the favourite of the men, the admired of the women; besides, he rarely failed, on occasions such as the present, to play the patron. Hence, after a few moments, in which his hand was grasped by at least twenty humble acquaintances, he gave an order that "ale was to be served all round." This largess was greeted with new acclamation. When it had subsided, Master Willis, with a significant killing look, bade all his friends be happy together; but that for himself, why he must join the girls, and have a dance up-stairs. This gallantry was met with another burst of applause, in the midst of which Master Willis, all smiles and happiness, disappeared.

"And who is that gentleman?" St. Giles ventured to ask of the barber, at the time his nearest neighbour.

"Who *is* he? Well, where did you come from? Not know him? Where was you born?" cried the barber.

"I'm—I'm a stranger hereabouts," answered St. Giles, a little vexed with himself for his untimely curiosity.

"So I should think, not to know Master Willis. A stranger! Why I should take you for a Frenchman, or an outlandish foreigner of some sort, never to have heard of him. The best hand at bowls and single-stick—the best hunter—the best shot—the best everything. Well, you do look like a foreigner," said the barber, glancing at St. Giles in a way that made him heart-sick.

"I'm a true Englishman," said St. Giles, "though I've been some years out of the country."

"Ha! serving your king, and all that?" said the barber. St. Giles nodded. "Well, like a good many of the sort, you don't seem to have made your fortin by it. But then, I suppose, you've

got a lot of glory? Now, within a dozen or two, can you tell us how many Frenchmen you've killed?" St. Giles winced from the small grey eyes of the barber, who, as though conscious of the confusion he created, pursued his queries with growing self-satisfaction. "You can't tell us how many, eh? A precious lot I should think, by the look of you. Well, if all over you don't smell of gunpowder!" and the barber affectedly held his nostrils, to give, as he conceived, point to his wit. St. Giles felt his patience fast departing: he therefore opened his hands, and fixing his eye upon the barber, again leisurely doubled his fist. The look, the gesture, was instantly understood by the wag, for immediately dropping his tone of banter, he became most courteously communicative. "But you was asking about Master Willis? To be sure—as a stranger, it's natural you shouldn't know. Well, his uncle's the richest farmer a hundred miles about. His land's as fat as butter, and Master Bob—we call him Bob here—will have every inch of it. He's a wild fellow, to be sure. Doesn't mind, when the temper's on him, knocking down a man like a bullock; but bless you! no harm in him—not a bit of harm. My service to you," and quaffing the ale—Master Willis's liberal gift—the barber moved away.

The time wore on, and St. Giles, exhausted by fatigue, made drowsy with his entertainment, dared to think of bed. Yes, he had the hardihood to promise himself that night at least, the shelter of a roof. "My good girl," said he, in a confidential whisper to Becky, "can I sleep anywhere here to-night—anywhere, you know?"

"Why, you see," answered Becky, her eyes instinctively wandering from rag to rag, as worn by St. Giles, "why, you see, the missus is very partic'lar." And then Becky, despite of her, looked dubiously at the toes of St. Giles, indecorously showing their destitution to the world. Having, quite unconsciously, counted the said toes, and assured herself there were ten of them, all in flagrant want of shoe-leather, Becky repeated, with even more emphasis—"Very partic'lar."

"I dare say—she's right, in course," answered St. Giles; "but I don't want nothing for nothing—I can pay for it."

"Oh, to be sure," said Becky quickly, "it isn't money; oh no, that's nothing—but it's the character of the house we stand upon. Missus says that houses are like Christians, and catches bad characters all the same as you catch the small-pox or anything of the sort from them as have 'em. That's what she says, and I dare say it's all true."

St. Giles made no answer; but a deep, heart-drawn sigh broke from him. Becky was turning away, when, touched by the sound,

she suddenly looked in St. Giles's face—it was on the instant so blankly wretched—so old, so hopeless in its look—the forced smile that had played about it had so quickly vanished, that, unknown to herself, with a feeling of compassion and sympathy, the poor girl caught St. Giles's hand, and with altered voice said —"I don't think missus has seen you, and as we're so busy to-night, she mayn't want to look at you; so be quiet a little while, and I dare say I can get you some nice straw in the barn."

"Thank 'ee," said St. Giles—"Do, God bless you;" and he pressed the girl's hand, and her simple, kindly heart was melted by the poor fellow's wretchedness, and with twinkling eyes and a smile on her coarse, broad, honest face, she left the room. In a few minutes the door was opened, and Becky with upraised finger stood without. St. Giles immediately obeyed the signal, and in brief time found himself on his way to bed, preceded by Becky with a lanthorn; for the moon had gone down, and the night was pitchy dark. "I've brought the light," said she, "for fear of the dog. He killed one man, or as good as killed him, for he never got over it; but he won't bite nobody when he sees 'em with me." And the conduct of the dog speedily bore out the character given him; for though with grinning teeth, and a low, snuffling howl, he walked round and round St. Giles, Becky—even as Una dominated the lion—held Dragon in complete subjection. Although she called him a brute, a beast, a nasty creature, and twenty other names of the like prettiness, Dragon with a patient wagging of the tail bore them all, his very patience —what a lesson for human philosophy!—turning invective into compliment. "Here it is," said Becky, opening the barn-door. "Here's straw as sweet as any clover; and there isn't many rats, for they was hunted only a month ago. You're not afeard of rats? Bless you, they're more afeard of Christians than Christians should be afeard of them; and so I tells missus; but for all that she will squeal at 'em. Well, people can't help what they call 'tipathies. As for me, I minds rats no more than rabbits. There, now, up in that corner; and if there isn't a sack and all to cover you! Why, you couldn't sleep better if you was a lord. And see here. Here's a bottle with some beer, and some bread and cheese, when you wake in the morning. I'm always hungry when I wake in the morning, I am; no matter what time I goes to bed: but that comes, as I say, of having a clear conscience, and doing no harm to nobody. There, good night—poor soul! God be with you!" And with this simple, earnest wish—this little wish that like the circle of the universe holds within it all things—did the kind, the gentle drudge of a way-side pot-house send the convict to his bed. No king was ever shown to tapestried

chamber with truer wishes for his rest, than went with St. Giles to his straw. "God be with you," said the girl; and the words of gentleness, the happy, hopeful tone that breathed in them, fell like balm upon the felon's heart; and in a few moments he was sunk in the deep happiness of sleep; he was far away in that neutral region of life, where emperors put off their crowns—where the arrogance of earth is calm and harmless—where pride and ostentation have not their blatant trumpets blown before them—where the purple of Dives is cast aside on the same heap with the rags of Lazarus—where the equality to all, that death shall everlastingly bring, is once a day rehearsed by all men—where life is simple breathing, and the slave loses the master.

For many nights had St. Giles slept in the open fields. Ragged, and worn, and hunger-stricken, he had nevertheless slept; and only when the daylight came felt for a time his sinews cramped and stiffened with the dews of night. Still with the sky above him, no more sheltered than his neighbour ox or sheep, he had slept; he had, despite of fortune, cheated misery with forgetfulness. Nature for a time had blessed him as she had blessed the happiest man. Yet sleep had come to him slowly, reluctantly; bodily want and suffering would for a time refuse the sweet oblivion. But here in a barn—with fresh, delicious, odorous straw; with roof and walls to hold out wind and rain—St. Giles composed himself to sleep as almost to eternal rest. He was happy, profoundly happy that he was lodged, comfortably, as any beast.

For an hour—yes, an hour at least—had St. Giles enjoyed the happiness of rest, when he was loudly, roughly awakened. "Hallo! you vagabond—get up, and answer for a murder," bawled a voice; and St. Giles, leaping to his feet, saw the barn half-filled with people, armed with sticks and weapons as for some sudden fray.

CHAPTER XII.

"WHAT 's the matter now?" cried St. Giles, pale and aghast; for instantly he believed himself detected; instantly saw the gaol, the gallows, and the hangman. "What 's the matter?" he cried, trembling from head to foot.

"What 's the matter?" roared the barber, "only a little bit of murder, that 's all—and that 's nothing to chaps like you."

Terrible as was the charge, nevertheless St. Giles felt himself

somewhat relieved: he was not, he found, apprehended as the escaped convict; that was yet unknown; and, oddly enough, with the accusation of bloodshed on him, he felt comparatively tranquil.

"Murder, is it," he said, "well, who 's murdered? And whoever he is, why is it to be me who 's killed him—tell me that?"

"Did you ever hear?" said the barber. "A chap, with rags on him, not fit to scare birds in a bean-field, and yet talks like one of us! I should like to know where such as you get crown pieces?"

"Never mind—never mind," said the host of the Lamb and Star, "that 's justice's work—not ours."

"Justice's work!" exclaimed the hostess, now pressing foremost of the crowd—"and what will justice do for us? When justice has hanged the ragamuffin, will justice give back the character of the house? Who 'll come to the Lamb and Star, when it 's known to harbour cut-throats? But it 's that hussy, Becky; it 's she that hid the murderer here; it 's she, I 'll be sworn it, knows all about the murder, for there isn't such a devil for breaking in the whole county." Such was the emphatic declaration of the hostess, who, by a kind of logic—not altogether uncommon to the sex—saw in Becky, the reckless destroyer of pottery, the consequent accomplice in human destruction. The reasoning, it must be confessed, was of the most violent, the most tyrannic kind; on which account, it was somewhat more attractive to Mrs. Blink; guileless, ingenuous soul! who, in her innocency, rated her handmaiden for bestowing a homicide in the barn of the Lamb and Star; when, had the matron known aught of the moral machinery of life, she ought instantly to have doubled Becky's wages for such inestimable service. Mrs. Blink ought to have known that to a public-house a murderer was far more profitable, to both tap and parlour, than a pretty barmaid. She ought to have looked upon the Lamb and Star as a made hostelry, from the instant it should be known that St. Giles, with the mark of Cain fresh upon him, changed his first blood-begotten dollar there; that afterwards he sought the sweets of sleep in the Lamb and Star's barn. Silly Mrs. Blink! Why, the very straw pressed by St. Giles was precious as though laid upon by Midas: to be split and worked into bonnets it was worth—what brain shall say how much a truss? But Mrs. Blink thought not after this fashion. She looked upon St. Giles as though he had brought so much blood upon the house—so many ineffaceable stains of shame and ignominy. Foolish woman! she ought rather to have made him her humblest curtsey; ought rather to have set her face with her sunniest smile, for having given the Lamb and Star the preference of his infamy. Benighted creature! she knew not the worth of a murder to a bar.

"And pray who is murdered?" again asked St. Giles, with an effrontery that again called up all the virtuous astonishment of the host and hostess. "If I've killed any body, can't you let me know who it is?"

"Yes, yes," cried the landlord, "you're just the fellow to brazen it out; but it won't do this time;" and he then looked knowingly at his wife, who was about to express herself on the certainty of St. Giles's fate, when she beheld Becky peeping anxiously from the crowd, most shamefully interested, as Mrs. Blink conceived, in the prisoner's condition. "Why, you wicked hussy! if you oughtn't to be hanged with him," cried the hostess: whereupon Becky immediately took to her heels, and was immediately followed by her mistress, whose loud indignation at length died a muttering death in the distance. Mrs. Blink being gone, there was dead silence for a moment; and then the landlord, with a puzzled look, jerking his head towards St. Giles, briefly asked counsel of one and all. "What shall we do with him?"

This query produced another pause. Every man seemed to feel as though the question was specially put to himself, and therefore did his best to prepare to answer it. Yes; almost every man scratched his head, and suddenly tried to look acute, sharp. "What's to be done wi 'un?" asked two or three musingly; and then looked in each other's faces, as though they looked at a dead wall. At length, wisdom descended upon the brain of the barber. "I'll tell you what we'll do with him," said the small oracle of the Lamb and Star, and suddenly all looked satisfied, as though the mystery was at length discovered,—"I'll tell you what we'll do with him: we'll leave him where he is." Everybody nodded assent to the happy thought. "He'll be just as safe here as in the cage, and that's a mile away. We've only got to tie him hand and foot, and three or four of us to sit up and watch him, and I warrant he doesn't slip through our fingers—I warrant me, varmint as he is, we'll give a good account of him to justice." The barber was rewarded with a murmur of applause; and such approbation he received all tranquilly, like a man accustomed to the sweets of moral incense. For St. Giles, he had again cast himself hopelessly upon the straw; again lay, seemingly indifferent to all around him. In the despair, the wretchedness of his condition, life or death was, he thought, to him alike. On all hands he was a hunted, persecuted wretch; life was to him a miserable disease; a leprosy of soul that made him alone in a breathing world. There might be companionship in the grave. And so dreaming, St. Giles lay dumb and motionless as a corpse, the while his captors took counsel for his security. "Hush!" said the barber, motioning silence, and then having stood a few

moments, listening, with upraised finger, he cried—"it 's my belief the rogue 's asleep; in that case, we needn't tie him; we 've only to watch outside: the night 's warm, the dog 's loose, and with a mug or so of ale, I 'm good to watch with any half-dozen of you." The truth is, the barber had been visited by a second thought that suggested to him the probability of rough usage at the hands of the prisoner, should there be an attempt to put him in bonds, and he therefore, with a pardonable regard for his own features, proposed to waive the ceremony of tying the culprit. "He'll have his share of rope in time," said the barber, much satisfied with the smallness of the jest. And thereupon, he beckoned his companions from the barn; and had already imagined the balminess of the coming ale—for the landlord had promised flowing mugs—when justice, professional justice, arrived in the shape of a sworn constable. "Where 's this murdering chap?" asked the functionary.

"All right, Master Tipps," said the barber, "all snug; we 've got him."

"There 's nothing right, nothing snug, without the cuffs," said the constable, displaying the irons with much official pride.—"He 's in the barn, there, eh, Master Blink?" Then I charge you all in the king's name—and this is his staff—to help me." The landlord, touched by the magic of the adjuration, stepped forward with the lantern; the constable followed, and was sulkily followed by two or three of the party. The barber, however, and one or two of his kidney, budged not a foot. "Isn't it always so?" he exclaimed, "if ever a man puts himself out of the way, and ventures his precious life and limbs, taking up all sorts of varmint—if ever he does it, why it 's safe for Master Constable to come down, and take away all the honour and glory. I should like to know what 's the use of a man feeling savage against rogues, if another man 's to have the credit of it? Now you 'll see how it will be, it 's the way of the world, oh yes! you 'll see. They 'll take this chap, and try him, and hang him, perhaps put him in chains and all, and we shall never be so much as thanked for it. No, we shall never be named in the matter. Well, after this, folks may murder who they like for me. And isn't it precious late, too! and will my wife believe I 've been nowhere but here?" cried the barber; and a sudden cloud darkened his face, and he ran off like a late schoolboy to his task. Poor St. Giles! he knew it not; but, if vengeance were sweet to think upon, there was somebody at home who would revenge the wrongs of the vagrant upon the barber. Somebody, who, at deep midnight, would scare sleep from his pillow, even whilst the feloniously accused snored among the straw. And after this

fashion may many a wretch take sweet comfort;—if, indeed, revenge be sweet; and there are very respectable folks to whom, in truth, it has very saccharine qualities, for they seem to enjoy it as children enjoy sugar-cane;—sweet comfort that, whatever wrong or contumely may be cast upon him in the light of day there may be somebody, as it would seem especially appointed, to chastise the evil-doer; and that, too, "in the dead waste and middle of the night;" to drive sleep from his eyeballs; to make him feel a coward, a nobody, a nincompoop, in his own holland.

Pleasant is it for the sour-thinking man who sees a blustering authority—whether grasping a beadle's staff or holding the scales of justice—sometimes to know that there is a louder authority at home, a greater vehemence of reproof, that may make the bully of the day the sleepless culprit of the night. Was there not Whitlow, beadle of the parish of St. Scraggs? What a man-beast was Whitlow! How would he, like an avenging ogre, scatter apple-women! How would he foot little boys, guilty of peg-tops and marbles! How would he puff at a beggar—puff like the picture of the north-wind in the spelling-book! What a huge, heavy, purple face he had, as though all the blood of his body was stagnant in his cheeks! And then, when he spoke, would he not growl and snuffle like a dog? How the parish would have hated him, but that the parish heard there was a Mrs. Whitlow; a small fragile woman, with a face sharp as a penknife, and lips that cut her words like scissors! And what a forlorn wretch was Whitlow, with his head brought once a night to the pillow! Poor creature! helpless, confused; a huge imbecility, a stranded whale! Mrs. Whitlow talked and talked; and there was not an apple-woman but in Whitlow's sufferings was not avenged; not a beggar, that thinking of the beadle at midnight, might not, in his compassion, have forgiven the beadle of the day. And in this punishment we acknowledge a grand, a beautiful retribution. A Judge Jefferys in his wig is an abominable tyrant; yet may his victims sometimes smile to think what Judge Jefferys suffers in his night-cap!

And now leave we for awhile St. Giles in the official custody of Tipps, who, proud of his handcuffs as a chamberlain of his wand, suffered not the least opportunity to pass without resorting to them. To him, handcuffs were the grace of life, the only security of our social condition. Man, without the knowledge of handcuffs, would to Tipps have been a naked wretch, indeed; a poor barbarian, needing the first glimmer of civilisation. Had philosophy talked to Tipps of the golden chain of necessity, to the sense of Tipps the chain would have been made of handcuffs. Hence, the constable had thought it his prime duty to handcuff

St. Giles ; and then, he suffered himself to be persuaded to leave the murderer in his straw ; the landlord handsomely promising the loan of a cart to remove the prisoner in the morning.

Some two miles distant from the Lamb and Star, where the road turned with a sharp angle, there was a deep hollow ; this place had been known, it may be, to the Druids, as the Devil's Elbow. Throughout the world, man has ungraciously given sundry ugly spots of the earth's face—its warts and pock-marks—to the fiend ; and the liberal dwellers of Kent had, as we say, made over an abrupt break-neck corner of earth to the Devil for his Elbow. It was at this spot that, whilst St. Giles was swallowing ale at the Lamb and Star, his supposed victim, the handsome, generous St. James was discovered prostrate, stunned, and wounded. Rumour had, of course, taken his life ; making with easiest despatch St. Giles a murderer ; for being an outcast and a beggar, how facile was the transformation ! But St. James was not dead ; albeit a deep wound, as from some mortal instrument, some dull weapon, as the law has it, on his temple, looked more than large enough for life to escape from. Happily for St. James, there were men in Kent who lived not a life of reverence for the law ; otherwise, it is more than probable that, undiscovered until the morning, the Devil's Elbow might have been haunted by another ghost. But it was to be otherwise. It was provided by fate that there should be half-a-dozen smugglers, bound on an unhallowed mission to the coast ; who, first observing St. James's horse, masterless and quietly grazing at the road's side, made closer search and thence discovered young St. James, as they at first believed, killed, and lying half-way down the hollow. "Here 's been rough work," cried one of the men ; "see, the old, wicked story—blood flowing, and pockets inside out. He 's a fine lad ; too fine for such a death." "All 's one for that," said a second ; "we can't bring him to life by staring at him : we 've queer work enough of our own on hand—every one for his own business. Come along." "He 's alive !" exclaimed a third, with an oath ; and as he spoke, St. James drew a long, deep sigh. "All the better for him," cried the second, "then he can take care of himself." "Why, Jack Bilson, you 'd never be such a hard-hearted chap as to leave anything with life in it, in this fashion ?" was the remonstrance of the first discoverer of St. James ; whereupon Mr. Bilson, with a worldliness of prudence, sometimes worth uncounted gold to the possessor, remarked that humanity was very well—but that everybody was made for everybody's self—and that while they were palavering there over nobody knew who, they might lose the running of the tubs. Humanity, as Mr. Bilson said, was very well ; but then there was a breeches pocket virtue

in smuggled Scheidam. "Well, if I was to leave a fellow-cretur in this plight, I should never have the impudence to hope to have a bit of luck again," said the more compassionate contrabandist, whose nice superstition came in aid of his benevolence; "and so I say, mates, let us carry him to that house yonder, make 'em take him in, and then go with light hearts and clean consciences upon our business." "Yes; if we ain't all taken up for robbers and murderers for our pains: but, Ben Magsby, you always was a obstinate grampus." And Ben Magsby carried out his humane purpose; for St. James was immediately borne to the house aforesaid. Loud and long was the knocking at the door, ere it was opened. At length, a little sharp-faced old woman appeared, and, with wonderful serenity, begged to know what was the matter. "Why, here 's a gentleman," said Magsby, "who 's been altogether robbed and well-nigh murdered."

"Robbed and murdered!" said the matron, calmly as though she spoke of a pie over-baked, or a joint over-roasted,—"robbed and murdered! What 's that to us? The public-house is the place for such things. Go to the Lamb and Star." But the woman spoke to heedless ears; for Ben Magsby and his mates—ere the woman had ceased her counsel—had borne the wounded man across the threshold, and unceremoniously entering the first discoverable apartment, had laid him on a couch.

"There," said Ben, returning with his companions to the door, "there, we 've done our duty as Christians, mind you do yours." And with this admonition, the smugglers vanished.

It was then that the little old woman showed signs of emotion. Murder and robbery at the public-house she could have contemplated with becoming composure; but to be under the same roof with the horror was not to be quietly endured so long as she had lungs; and so thinking, she stood in the hall, and vehemently screamed. Like boatswain's whistle did that feminine summons pierce every corner of the mansion: the cupboard mouse paused over stolen cheese—the hearth-cricket suddenly was dumb—the deathwatch in the wall ceased its amorous tick-tick—so sudden, sharp, and all-pervading was that old woman's scream. "Why, Dorothy! is that you?" exclaimed a matronly gentlewoman, hastening down stairs, and followed by a young lady of apparently some three or four and twenty. "Is it possible? Why, what 's the matter?"

"Nothing at all, ma'am—nothing," said Dorothy, suddenly relapsing into her customary apathy; for, sooth to say, she was a sort of vegetable woman; a drowsy, dreamy person, whose performance of such a scream was considered by its hearers as a most wondrous manifestation of power. Nobody, to have looked

at Dorothy Vale, would have thought that within her dwelt such a scream *in posse;* but, sometimes, great is the mystery of little old women. "Nothing at all, ma'am—that is, don't be frightened—that is, they say, ma'am, murder and robbery."

"Heavens! Where—where?" exclaimed the young lady.

"It isn't your dear husband, ma'am—oh no, it isn't master, so don't be frightened," said the tranquil Dorothy. "But, if you please, ma'am, it's in that room—I mean the body, ma'am."

The young lady, for a moment, shrank back in terror; and then, as though reproving herself for the weakness, she rapidly passed into the room, followed by her elder companion. At the same instant, the wounded man had half-risen from the couch, and was looking wanderingly around him—"Clarissa! Can it be?" he cried, and again swooning, fell back. Instantly, the girl was on her knees at his side; unconscious of the reproving, the astonished looks of the matron.

"He 's dying—oh, Mrs. Wilton, he is dying! Murdered—I know it all—I see it all—and for me—wretch that I am—for me," and her form writhed with anguish, and she burst into an agony of tears.

"Oh, no—the hurt is not mortal; be assured, I am surgeon enough to know that; be assured of it, Mrs. Snipeton;" thus spoke Mrs. Wilton, in words of coldest comfort, and with a manner strangely frozen. "Dorothy, stay you with your mistress, whilst I send for assistance, and seek what remedies I can myself. I will return instantly: meanwhile, I say, remain with your mistress."

And St. James, unconscious of the hospitality, was the guest of Mr. Ebenezer Snipeton; whose character, the reader may remember, was somewhat abruptly discussed by the stranger horseman in the past chapter. It was here, at Dovesnest, that the thrifty money-seller kept his young wife close; far away, and safe, as he thought, from the bold compliments, the reckless gallantry of the rich young men who, in their frequent time of need, paid visits to the friend who, the security certain as the hour, never failed to assist them. Mr. Snipeton was not, in the ordinary matters of life, a man who underrated his own advantages, moral and physical. Sooth to say, he was, at times, not unapt to set what detraction might have thought an interested value on them. And yet, what a touchstone for true humility in man is woman; Ebenezer Snipeton, in all worldly dealings, held himself a match for any of the money-coining sons of Adam. He could fence with a guinea—and sure we are guinea-fencing is a far more delicate art, is an exercise demanding a finer touch, a

readier sleight, than the mere twisting of steel foils;—he could fence, nay, with even the smallest current coin of the realm, and —no matter who stood against him—come off conqueror. "Gold," says Shelley, "is the old man's sword." And most wickedly at times, will hoary-bearded men, with blood as cold and thin as water in their veins, hack and slash with it! They know—the grim, palsied warriors!—how the weapon will cut heart-strings; they know what wounds it will inflict; but then, the wounds bleed inwardly: there is no outward and visible hurt to call for the coroner; and so the victim may die, and show, as gossips have it, a very handsome corpse, whilst homicidal avarice, with no drop of outward gore upon his hands—no damning spots seen by the world's naked eye—mixes in the world, a very respectable old gentleman; a man who has a file of receipts to show for everything; a man who never did owe a shilling; and above all, a man who takes all the good he gets as nothing more than a proper payment for his exceeding respectability. He is a pattern man; and for such men heaven rains manna; only in these days the shower comes down in gold.

Ebenezer Snipeton, we say, had a high, and therefore marketable opinion of himself; for the larger the man's self-esteem the surer is he of putting it off in the world's mart. The small dealer in conceit may wait from the opening to the closing of the market, and not a soul shall carry away his little pennyworth; now the large holder is certain of a quick demand for all his stock. Men are taken by its extent, and close with him immediately. If, reader, you wanted to buy one single egg, would you purchase that one egg of the poor, rascal dealer, who had only one egg to sell? Answer us, truly. Behold the modest tradesman. He stands shrinkingly, with one leg drawn up, and his ten fingers interlaced lackadaisically, the while his soul, in its more than maiden bashfulness, would retreat, get away, escape anyhow from its consciousness. And so he stands, all but hopeless behind his one egg. He feels a blush crawl over his face—for there are blushes that do crawl—as you pass by him, for pass him you do. It is true you want but one egg; nevertheless, to bring only one egg to market shows a misery, a meanness in the man, that in the generous heat of your heart's-blood, you most manfully despise. And, therefore, you straddle on to the tradesman who stands behind a little mountain of eggs; and timidly asking for one —it is so very poor, so wretched a bit of huckstering, you are ashamed to be seen at it—you take the first egg offered you, and humbly laying down your halfpenny farthing, vanish straight away! As it is with eggs, so, in the world-market, is it with human pretensions. The man with a small, single conceit is

shunned, a silly, miserable fellow; but the brave, wholesale-dealer, the man of a thousand pretensions, is beset by buyers. Now, Ebenezer was one of your merchants of ten thousand eggs —and though to others they had proved addled, they had nevertheless been gold to him. And yet, did Ebenezer's wife—his ripe, red-lipped spouse of two-and-twenty—somehow touch her husband with a strange, a painful humility. He had sixty iron winters—and every one of them plain as an iron-bar—in his face. Time had used his visage as Robinson Crusoe used his wooden calendar, notching every day in it. And what was worse, though Time had kept an honest account—and what, indeed, so honest, so terribly honest as Time?—nevertheless, he had so marked the countenance—(it is a shabby, shameful trick Time has with some faces)—that every mark to the thoughtless eye counted well-nigh double. And Snipeton knew this. He knew, too, that upon his nose—half-way, like sentinel on the middle of a bridge—there was a wart very much bigger than a pea, with bristles, sticking like black pins in it. Now, this wart Ebenezer in his bachelor days had thought of like a philosopher; that is, he had never thought about it. Nay, his honeymoon had almost waned into the cold, real moon that was ever after to blink upon his marriage life, ere Ebenezer thought of his wrinkled, pouch-like cheeks; of his more terrible wart. And then did every bristle burn in it, as though it was turned to red hot wire: then was he plagued, tormented by the thought of the wart, as by some avenging imp. He seemed to have become all wart: to be one unsightly excrescence. The pauper world envied the happiness of Ebenezer Snipeton: with such wealth, with such a wife, oh, what a blessed man! But the world knew not the torments of the wart! And wherefore was Ebenezer thus suddenly mortified? We have said, he had taken a wife as young, and fresh, and beautiful as spring. And therefore, after a short season, was Ebenezer in misery. He looked at his wife's beauty, and then he thought of his withered face—that felon wart! In her very loveliness—like a satyr drinking at a crystal fount—he saw his own deformity. Was it possible she could love him? The self-put question—and he could not but ask it,—with her, alone, in bed, at board—that tormenting question still would whisper, snake-voiced in his ear, could she love him? And his heart—his heart that heretofore had been cold and blooded like a fish—would shrink and tremble, and dare not answer. True it was, she was obedient; too obedient. She did his bidding promptly, humbly, as though he had bought her for his slave. And so, in truth, he had: and there had been a grave man of the church, grave witnesses, too, to bind the bargain. Verily, he had bought her; and on her

small white finger—it was plain to all who saw her—she wore the manacle of her purchaser.

And Ebenezer, as his doubt grew stronger—as the memory of his outside ugliness became to him a daily spectre—resolved to hide this human ware, this pretty chattel of flesh and blood, far away in rustic scenes. And therefore bought he a secluded house, half-buried amid gloomy trees—cypress and dead man's yew—and this house, in the imp-like playfulness of his soul, he called Dovesnest. That it should be so very near the Devil's Elbow was of no matter to Ebenezer; nay, there was something quaint, odd, fantastic in the contrast; a grim humour that a little tickled him.

And thus, reader, have we at an important moment—if this small toy of a history may be allowed to have important moments—thus have we paused to sketch the owner of Dovesnest; to digress on his bachelor confidence, and his married modesty; to speak of his love, and of the demon ugliness—the wrinkles and the ever-burning wart—that perplexed it. All this delay, we know, is a gross misdemeanour committed on the reader of romance; who, when two lovers meet in misery and peril, has all his heart and understanding for them alone; and cares not that the writer—their honoured parent, be it remembered—should walk out upon the foolscap, and without ever so much as asking permission, begin balancing some peacock's feather on his nose; talking the while of the deep Argus' eye—purple and green and gold, glowing at the end of it; if, indeed, it be an Argus' eye. For ourselves, we doubt the truth of the transformation. We see in the story nothing but a wicked parable, reflecting most ungraciously on the meekness and modesty of the last-made sex; the straitened rib. Juno, we are told, when she had killed Argus, took the poor fellow's eyes and fixed them for ever and for ever on her peacock's tail. Now, what is most unseemingly shadowed forth in this? Why, a most mean, pusillanimous insinuation that when a woman wears a most beautiful gown, she desires that the eyes of all the world may hang upon it. This we take to be the meaning of—but we are balancing the feather again: and here is poor St. James bleeding on the couch whilst—stony-hearted theorists that we are!—we are talking of peacocks.

Mrs. Snipeton—(such was the name which, among the other wrongs Ebenezer, the money-merchant, had committed upon the young and beautiful creature who knelt at the side of St. James)—Mrs. Snipeton—no; it will not do. We will not meddle with the ugly gift of her husband: we will rather owe an obligation to her godfathers and godmothers.

Clarissa still knelt at the side of St. James; and even Mrs. Dorothy Vale marvelled at the whiteness of her mistress's cheeks—at the big tears that rolled from her upraised eyes—whilst her lips moved as though in passionate prayer. "God bless me!" said Mrs. Vale, "I don't think the young man 's dead, but—oh, the goodness! what a pretty couch his wound will make! Ha! people have no thought, or they 'd have taken him into the kitchen. He 'll be worse than five pound to that couch if a groat. You can get out anything but blood," said Mrs. Vale. "If it had been wine, I shouldn't have minded it."

"He 's dying! He 's murdered—his blood is on my head!" cried Clarissa, as Mrs. Wilton returned to the room.

"Be tranquil; pray be calm," said Mrs. Wilton in a tone of something like command that, but for the misery of the moment, could not have escaped Clarissa; for Mrs. Wilton was only housekeeper at Dovesnest. "He will be well—quite well. I have despatched Nicholas for the surgeon; though I think I have skill sufficient to save the fee." And this she said in so hopeful a tone, that Clarissa languidly smiled at the encouragement. "You will leave the gentleman with me and Dorothy. We will sit up with him."

"No," said Clarissa, with a calm determination, seating herself near the wounded man. "No."

"Mrs. Snipeton!" cried the housekeeper in a tone of mixed remonstrance and reproach.

"My husband being absent, it is my duty—yes, my duty"—repeated Clarissa, "to attend to the hospitality of his house."

"Hospitality," repeated Mrs. Wilton; and her cold, yet anxious eye glanced at Clarissa, who, slightly frowning, repelled the look. "As you will, Mrs. Snipeton—as you will, Mrs. Snipeton," and the housekeeper gave an emphasis to the conjugal name that made its bearer wince as at a sudden pain. "There is no danger now, I am sure," she continued; washing the wound, whilst the sufferer every moment breathed more freely. At length, consciousness returned. He knew the face that looked with such earnest pity on him.

"Clarissa—Clarissa!" cried St. James.

"Be silent—you must be silent," said Mrs. Wilton, with somewhat more than the authority of a nurse—"You must not speak—indeed, you must not—you are hurt, greatly hurt,—and for your own sake—for more than your own sake"—and the lips of the speaker trembled and grew pale—"yes, for more than your own sake, you must be silent."

"All will be well, sir," said Clarissa; "trust me, you are in careful hands. The doctor will be here, and—"

"Nay, I need none, fair lady," answered St. James; "for I am already in careful hands. Indeed, I know it—feel it."

"Oh, you must be silent—indeed you must," urged Mrs. Wilton imperatively; and then she added in a voice of sorrow, and with a most troubled look,—"otherwise you know not the danger, the misery that may befal you. Mrs. Snipeton," and again she turned with anxious face towards Clarissa, "Dorothy and I can watch."

Clarissa made no answer; but gravely bowed her head. Mrs. Wilton, suppressing a sigh, spoke no further; but busied herself with her patient's wound, whilst Clarissa and St. James mutely interchanged looks that went to the heart of the saddened, the unheeded housekeeper.

CHAPTER XIII.

The hall clock had struck five. The beauty of a spring morning was upon the earth. The sun shone into the sick man's room; green leaves rustled at his window; and a robin, perched on the topmost branch of a tall holly, sang a song of thankful gladness to the world. Clarissa, who had watched all night, walked in the garden. How fresh and full of hope was all around her; how the very heart of the earth seemed to beat with the new life of spring! And she, who was made to sympathise with all that was beautiful—she, who was formed to dwell on this earth as in a solemn place, seeing in even its meanest things adornments of a holy temple; vessels sacred to the service of glorifying nature; why to her, in that hour, all around was but a painted scene; an unreal thing that with its mockery pained her wearied heart; yearning as it did for what lay beyond. Who could have thought—who had seen that beautiful creature—that she walked with death? And yet, with no eyes, no ears, for the lovely sights and sounds about her, she walked and talked with the great Comforter. Her look was solemn, too; as though caught from her companion. Her eye was full and clear; and now gleaming strangely as with the light of another world. And now she would press her forehead with her small thin hand, as though to soothe its misery; and now she would look clouded and perplexed; and now, so sweet a smile of patience would break into her face, that it was to wrong her nobleness to pity her. And still—as we have said—she talked with death.

St. James lay in a deep sleep. For a few moments he had

been left alone—his door unclosed. With soft, but sudden step, a man entered the apartment. It was Ebenezer Snipeton. He had slept half-way on his journey from London; and rising early had ridden hard that he might surprise his solitary wife with a husband's smiles at breakfast. The morning was so beautiful that its spirit had entered even the heart of Ebenezer; and so, he had ridden, for him, very gaily along. Yes; he was touched by the season. He felt—or thought he felt—that there was something under the blue sky, something almost as good as ready gold. He looked with a favourable eye upon the primroses that lighted up the hedge-sides, and thought them really pretty: thought that, when all was said, there might really be some use in flowers. Once, too, he checked his horse into a slow walk, that he might listen to a lark that sang above him, and with its gushing melody made the sweet air throb. He smiled too, grimly smiled, at the cunning of two magpies that, alighted from a tall elm, walked in the road, talking—though with unslit tongues—of their family's affairs; of where best to provide worms for their little ones; of their plumage, sprouting daily; of the time when they would fly alone; and of other matters, perhaps, too familiar to the reader, if he be parental. And Ebenezer thought nothing was so beautiful as the country; as, in truth, other men like Ebenezer might have thought at four or five in the morning: but then as 'Change hours approach, the romance fades with the early mist; and at 10, A.M., the Arcadian somehow finds himself the scrivener. Thus, too, the early rising man of law—suburban lodged—may before breakfast feel his heart leap with the lambkins in the mead; but, breakfast swallowed, he journeys with unabated zeal, inexorable to the parchment.

And Ebenezer, as he rode, determined henceforth to look on everything with smiling eyes. Yes; he had before always stared at the wrong side of the tapestry. He would henceforth amend such unprofitable foolishness. He had all to make man happy; wealth, a lovely wife, and no gout. To be sure, there were a few things of former times that—well, he would hope there was time enough to think of them. Of them, when the time came, he would repent; and that, too, most vehemently. And so Ebenezer forgot his wrinkled face; almost forgot the wart upon his nose. And Clarissa loved him? Of course. It was not her nature to be impetuous: no, she was mild and nun-like; he had chosen her for those rare qualities, but she loved him as a meek and modest gentlewoman ought to love her husband. This sweet conviction brought Ebenezer to his court-yard door. It was open. Well, there was nothing strange in that. Nicholas, of course, was up; and yet—where was he? Ebenezer's heart

seemed to fall fathoms ; to drop in his body, like a plummet. In a moment, the earth was disenchanted. There, before the eyes of Ebenezer, stood Ebenezer withered, with the bristled wart bigger than ever upon his nose ; in his sudden despair, he saw his bad gifts magnified. And there was something, too, about the house that looked suspicious. The windows seemed to leer at him. The old house-dog crawled towards him, with no wag in his tail. The sparrows chirped mockingly. The house now looked as though it held a corpse—and now, as though deserted. Ebenezer held his breath and listened. He heard nothing—nothing. And now, far, far away, from a thick, night-dark wood, the cuckoo shouted. Ebenezer passed into the court-yard, and entered his silent house. In a few moments he stood beside the couch of the sleeping St. James.

A terrible darkness fell upon the old man's face as he gazed at the patient. A tumult, an agony of heart was raging within him, and he shook like a reed. Still he was silent ; silent and struggling to master the fury that possessed him. He breathed heavily ; and then seated himself in a chair, and still with the eyes of a ghost looked on the sleeper. Devilish thoughts passed through the old man's brain : murder whispered in his ear, and still he fiercely smiled and listened. With his five fingers he could do it—strangle the disturber in his sleep. And the old man looked at his hands and chuckled. And now there is a quick step in the passage ; and now, Clarissa enters the apartment.

" Dear sir ! husband," at length she uttered.

Suddenly standing statue-like, the old man with pointing figure, and fierce accusing face, asked " Who is this ? "

Ere Clarissa could answer, hasty feet were heard in the hall, and Mrs. Wilton entered the room, followed by a thick-set man, with a red, round, oily face, and his hair matted with stale powder. He was dressed in a very brown black coat, that scarcely looked made for him ; with buckskin breeches, and high riding boots. Under one arm he carried a thick-thonged whip ; and in his right hand, prominently held forth, as challenging the eyes of all men, a rusty beaver. " Couldn't come before—very sorry, but it always is so ; those paupers—I 'm sure of it, it 's like 'em—they always do it on purpose. It 's a part of the wicked obstinacy of the poor, and I don't know, sir, whether you 've observed it ; but the poor are always obstinate—it 's in 'em from the beginning. I 've not brought so many into the world—the more my ill-luck—without knowing their wickedness from the first." Thus spoke, in high, brassy voice, Mr. Peter Crossbone—unconsciously flattered by the poor as Doctor Crossbone—parish doctor ; who, when sought for at his house by Nicholas, was four

miles away, summoned to assist the introduction of another pauper baby into this over-stocked, and therefore pauperised planet. What Mercury, Venus, and other respectable planets must think of this our reckless, disreputable mother earth—this workhouse planet, the shame and reproach of all better systems—it is not for a son of earth to say. But, surely, if Mercury, Venus, and others know anything of our goings on, they must now and then look down upon us with ineffable scorn: at least, they ought. And yet, they do not; but with all our sins and all our foolishness, still beam upon us, with eyes of love and tenderness.

The voice of Crossbone immediately awakened the patient. Crossbone had, however, in his time sent so many patients to sleep, that he might fairly be permitted occasionally to disturb a slumberer. St. James, observing Snipeton, rose up hastily, and with his blood burning in his face, was about to speak.

"You must be quiet, sir. Mrs. Wilton has told me all that a mere woman can know of your case, and—I am sorry to say it to you, sir,"—and here Crossbone shook his head, and heaved a laborious sigh—"I 'm sorry to say it, you must be very quiet."

"But, Mr. Snipeton," cried St. James, "permit me even now to explain—"

"The doctor says, no," answered Snipeton, and his lip curled, "you must be quiet. There will be time for us to talk, when your wounds are healed. For the present, we will leave you with your surgeon." And Snipeton, looking command at his wife, quitted the room, followed by his obedient, trembling helpmate.

"Phwegh!" cried Crossbone, possessing himself of his patient's wrist, "a race-horse pulse; a mile a minute. Fever, very high. Let me look at your tongue, sir: don't laugh, sir—pray don't laugh"—for St. James was already tittering at the solemnity of Crossbone—"a doctor is the last man to be laughed at."

"That 's true indeed: I never before felt the force of that truth," said St. James.

"Your tongue, sir, if you please!" St. James, mastering his mirth, displayed that organ.

"Ha! Humph! Tongue like a chalk-pit. This, sir," and here Crossbone instinctively thrust both his hands into his pockets, "this will be a long bout, sir—a very long bout."

"I think not—I feel not," said St. James, smiling. "'Tis nothing—a mere nothing."

"Ha, sir!" cried Crossbone. "'Tis pleasant—droll, sometimes—to hear what people call nothing; and in a few days, they 're gone, sir; entirely gone. But I 'll not alarm you—I have had worse cases—nevertheless, sir, a man with a hole in his skull, such a hole as that"—and here Crossbone tightly closed

his eyelids, and gave a sharp, short shake of the head—"but I 'll not alarm you. Still, sir, if you 've any little affairs to make straight—there 's a jewel of a lawyer only five miles off, the prettiest hand at a will—"

"I 'll not trouble him this bout, doctor," said St. James, who saw as clearly into Crossbone, as though, like Momus' man, he wore a pane of the best plate-glass in his bosom. "I have every faith in you."

"Sir, the confidence is flattering: and I think between us, we may cheat the worms. Nevertheless, it 's an ugly blow—the eighth of an inch more to the right or left, and—"

"I know what you would say," cried St. James. "Blows are generally dealt after that fashion; there 's great good luck in 'em. The faculty are often much indebted to the eighth of an inch, more or less."

"You must not talk, sir: indeed, you must not, delighted as otherwise I should be to hear you.—Yes: now I see the whole of the mischief: now I am thoroughly possessed of the matter," and Crossbone looked with an air of considerable satisfaction at the wound. "'Twill be a tedious, but a beautiful case. Pray, sir, should you know the ruffian who has nearly deprived the world of what I am sure will be—with a blessing on my poor assistance"—and here Crossbone softly closed his hands and bowed—"one of its noblest ornaments? Should you know the wretch?"

"I don't know—perhaps—I can't say," answered St. James, carelessly.

"When you see him, no doubt? And I am delighted to inform you the villain is secured. With the blessing of justice he 'll be hanged; which will be a great consolation to all the neighbourhood. Yes; I heard it all, as I came along. The ruffian, with your blood upon his hands, was taken at the Lamb and Star—taken with a purse of gold in his pocket. His execution will be a holiday for the whole country;" and Crossbone spoke as of a coming jubilee.

"Taken, is he?" cried St. James, with a vexed look. "I 'm sorry for it. Come, doctor, I must leave this to-day. My hurt is but a trifle; but I can feel, can appreciate your professional tenderness. I must make towards London this very morning."

"Humph! Well, sir, we 'll talk about it; we 'll see what 's to be done;" said Crossbone, with sudden melancholy at the resolute manner of his head-strong patient. "Nevertheless, you must let me dress your wound, and then take a little potion that I 'll make up for you, and then—we shall see." Hereupon, St. James placidly resigned himself to the hands of Crossbone, who very leisurely

drest the wound, again and again declaring that the patient was only on this side of the grave by the eighth of an inch. There never had been a skull so curiously broken. At length, Crossbone took his leave of the sufferer, with the benevolent assurance that he would make up something nice for him; of which the patient silently determined not to swallow a drop.

"Well, doctor?" asked Snipeton, with a savage leer, as Crossbone passed into the hall,—"how is his lordship now?"

"Lordship!" exclaimed Crossbone, now looking wonderment, and now smirking—"is he really a lord? Bless me!"

"How is he, man?" cried Snipeton, fiercely.

"Hush! Mr. Snipeton—hush, we can't talk here; for I 've a great responsibility—I feel it, a great responsibility—hush, my dear sir—hush!" and Crossbone trod silently as though he walked on felt, and lifting his finger with an air of professional command, he led Snipeton into an adjoining apartment, where sat Clarissa, pale and motionless. Here Snipeton expected an answer to his question; but Crossbone, raising his eyes and his closed hands—a favourite gesture with him when deeply moved—only said, "and he is a lord!"

"Well, lords die, don't they?" asked Snipeton, with a sneer.

"Why"—Crossbone unconsciously hesitated—"yes. And, between ourselves, Mr. Snipeton,—I can speak confidently on the matter, having the gentleman in my hands, he is"—Crossbone gave a knell-like emphasis to every syllable—"he is in very great danger."

"Indeed?" cried old Snipeton, and a smile lighted up his withered face, and he looked intently at his wife, as her hand unconsciously grasped her chair. "Indeed?" repeated the old man very blithely.

"Your pardon, for a minute, my good sir," said the apothecary. "I 'll just send this to my assistant—your man Nicholas must mount and gallop—for there 's a life, a very dear life to the country no doubt, depending on it." And Crossbone proceeded to write his sentence in his best bad Latin.

Clarissa felt that her husband's eye was upon her; yet sat she statue-like, with a terrible calmness in her pale face. The old man, his heart stung by scorpion jealousy, gazed on her with savage satisfaction. And she knew this; and still was calm, tranquil as stone. She felt the hate that fed upon her misery, yet shrank not from its tooth.

"Mrs. Wilton," said Crossbone, as the housekeeper timidly entered the room, "you 'll give this to Nicholas—tell him to gallop with it to my assistant, Mr. Sims; and, above all, let him take care of the medicine, for there 's life and death—a lord's life and

death in it," said the doctor, unconscious of the probable truth he uttered.

"And his lordship," said old Snipeton, gently rubbing his hands, "his lordship is in very great danger?"

"The fact is, Mr. Snipeton, there are men—I blush to say it, who belong to our glorious profession—there are men who always magnify a case that they may magnify their own small abilities, their next-to-nothing talent, in the treatment of it. I need not say that Peter Crossbone is not such a man. But this, sir, I will say; that every week of my life I do such things here in the country—hedge-side practice, sir, nothing more; hedge-side practice;—such things that if any one of 'em was done in London, that one would lift me into my carriage, and give me a cane with ten pounds' worth of virgin gold upon it. But, sir, no man can cultivate a reputation among paupers. It 's no matter what cure you make; they 're thought things of course; paupers are known to stand anything. Why there was a case of hip-joint I had—there never was so sweet a case. If that hip-joint had been a lord's, as I say, I ought to have stepped from it into my carriage. But it was a cow-boy's, sir; a wretched cow-boy's; a lad very evilly-disposed—very: he 'll be hanged, I 've no doubt,—and, sir, isn't it a dreadful thing to consider, that a man's genius—a case like that—should go to the gallows, and never be heard of? I put it to you, sir, isn't it dreadful?"

Snipeton granted something that Crossbone took as an affirmative; and, thus encouraged, proceeded. "Ha, sir! how different is London practice among people who really are people! What 's that, sir, to the—yes, I must say it—to the disgrace of being a parish doctor? Now, sir, the man—the man-midwife, sir, in a proper walk of society, feels that he is nobly employed. He 's bringing dukes and lords into the world; he 's what I call cultivating the lilies, that, as they say, neither toil nor spin: that 's a pleasure—that 's an honour—that 's a delight. But what does a parish man-midwife do, sir? Why, he brings paupers upon the earth: he does nothing but cultivate weeds, sir—weeds: and if he is a man of any feeling, sir, he can't but feel it as a thing beneath him. Mr. Snipeton, I 'm almost ashamed of myself to declare, that within these eight-and-forty hours I 've brought three more weeds into the world."

"Humph!" said Snipeton.

"And, as a man who wishes well to his country, you may guess my feelings. How different, now, with the man who practises among people who, as I say, are people! A beautiful high-life baby is born. The practitioner may at once be proud of it. In its first little squeal he hears the voice, as I may say, of the

House of Lords. In its little head he sees, if I may be allowed to use the expression, the *ovaria* of acts of parliament; for he 's a born law-maker. About its little, kicking, red leg, he already beholds the most noble Order of the Garter. Now, sir, this is something to make a man proud of his handiwork: but, sir, what is the reflection of the parish doctor? He never works for his country. No; when he looks upon a baby—if he 's any feelings worthy of a man—he must feel that he 's brought so much offal into the world. He looks upon a head which is to have nothing put into it; nothing, perhaps, but sedition and rebellion, and all that infamy. He sees little fingers that are born—yes, sir, born—to set wires for hares; and the fact is, if, as I say, the man has feelings, he feels that he 's an abettor of poaching, and all sorts of wickedness;—of wickedness that at last—and it 's very right it should be so—at last takes the creature to the gallows. Now, sir, isn't it a dreadful thing for a man—for a professional man, for a man who has had a deal of money spent upon his education—isn't it a dreadful thing for him to know that he may be only a sort of purveyor to the gallows? I feel the wrong, sir; feel it, acutely, here;" and Crossbone tapped his left side with his fore-finger. "I know that I 'm an abettor to a crying evil, going about as I do, bringing weeds into the world: but I can't help it, it 's my business: nevertheless I feel it. Something ought to be done to put a stop to it: I 'm not politician enough to say what; but unless something 's done, all I know is this, the weeds will certainly overgrow the lilies."

"And your patient, his gallant and amiable lordship," said Snipeton, still eyeing his wife, "is in danger?"

"Great danger," answered Crossbone. "Nevertheless, with a blessing—understand me, Mr. Snipeton, with a blessing, for however wondrous my cure, I hope I have not the presumption to take it all to myself—no, I trust, without offence be it said, to some practitioners I could name, that I have some religion—therefore, with a blessing, his lordship may be set upon his legs. But it will be a long job, a very long job; and he mustn't be removed. Just now, he 's in a slight delirium; talked about travelling towards London this very day. 'Twould be death, sir; certain death." And Crossbone blew his nose.

"Indeed! Certain death?" repeated Snipeton, smiling grimly; and still watching the face of his wife. "I fear—I mean I hope—Mr. Crossbone, that your anxiety for so good, so handsome a young man—a nobleman too—may, without any real cause, increase your fears. For, as you say, we ought to be anxious for the lilies."

"I 'd have given the worth of—of—I don't know what—could

I have been here before. Two or three hours earlier might have made all the difference ; for his lordship has great nervous irritability ; is most wonderfully and delicately strung. But I was away, as I say, producing the weeds, sir. Yes, I 've ridden I 'm ashamed to own how many miles since ten o'clock last night ; and what 's my reward, sir ? What, as parish doctor and midwife, is my consolation ? Why this, sir ; that I 've helped to bring misery and want, and I don't know how many other sorts of vices into the world, when I might—for without vanity I will say it—when I might have been employed for the future honour and glory of my country. Ha, Mr. Snipeton, happy is the professional man who labours among the lilies ! Sweet is his satisfaction ! Now, sir, when I ride home early in the morning—for the parish people, as I say, always make a point of knocking a man up at the most unseasonable hour ; they do it on purpose, sir, to show the power they have over you—now, sir, when I 'm riding home, what 's my feelings ? Why, sir, as a lover of my country, there 's something in my breast that won't let me feel happy and comfortable. There 's something that continually reproaches me with having helped to add to the incumbrance of the nation : as I say, that distresses me with the thought that I've been cultivating weeds, sir, nothing but weeds. Now a job like the present I look upon as a reward for my past misfortunes. It is a beautiful case !"

" Because so full of danger ? " said Snipeton, still looking at his pale and silent wife.

" It is impossible that a blow could have been struck more favourably for a skilful surgeon. The sixteenth part of an inch, sir, more or less on one side or the other, and that young man must have been a very handsome corpse."

Snipeton made no answer ; but with clenched teeth, and suppressed breath, still glared at his wife. Passion shook him, yet he controlled it ; his eyes still upon the pale face that every moment grew whiter. Another instant, and Clarissa fell back in her chair, speechless, motionless. Her husband moved not, but groaned despairingly.

" Fainted ! " cried Crossbone. " Call Mrs. Wilton," and at the same moment the housekeeper appeared. With anguish in her look she hastened to her mistress. " Nothing, nothing at all," said the apothecary ; and then, with a smirk towards Snipeton, " nothing, my dear sir, but what 's to be expected."

" She 's worse, sir—much worse, I fear, than you suppose," said Mrs. Wilton, and she trembled.

" I think, ma'am," replied Crossbone with true pill-box dignity, " I think I ought to know how ill a lady is, and how ill she ought to be. Have you no salts—no water, in the house ? "

"I shall be better—in a moment, better," said Clarissa feebly, and then grasping the arm of Mrs. Wilton, she added, "help me to my room." She then rose with an effort, and supported by the housekeeper, quitted the apartment. And still her husband followed her with eyes glaring like a wild beast's. Then, looking up, he caught the relaxed, the simpering face of the apothecary.

"In the name of the fiends," cried Snipeton, fiercely, "wherefore, with that monkey face, do you grin at me?"

"My dear sir," said Crossbone, smiling still more laboriously, "my dear sir, you 're a happy man!"

"Happy!" cried Snipeton, in a hoarse voice, and with a look of deepest misery—"Happy!"

"Of course. You ought to be. What more delightful than the hope of—eh?—a growing comfort to your declining years—a staff, as the saying is, to your old age?"

The mystic meaning of the apothecary flashed upon the husband; the old man shook, as though ague-stricken, and covering his face with his hands, he fell heavily as lead into a chair.

Mr. Crossbone was silent in his astonishment. He looked wonderingly about him. Was his practice to be so greatly enlarged in one day? Could it be possible that Snipeton, a man who wore like oak, could be ill? Snipeton, to be sure, was not, to Crossbone's thought, a lily patient; but then, how very far was he above the weeds! The apothecary was about to feel Snipeton's pulse; had the professional fingers on the wrist, when the old man snatched his arm away, and that with a vigour that well nigh carried Crossbone off his legs. The apothecary was about to pay some equivocal compliment to the old gentleman's strength, when Nicholas, flustered, with a startling piece of news, ran in with the medicine duly compounded by Mr. Sims.

"They was bringing the murderer to the house, that the gentleman"—for Nicholas knew not the sufferer was a lord—"might 'dentify the bloodspiller afore he died."

And Nicholas repeated truly what he had heard. Rumour had travelled—and she rarely goes so fast as when drawn by lies—to the Lamb and Star. And there—not stopping to alight—she hallooed into the gaping ears of the landlady the terrible intelligence that the young gentleman almost murdered last night, lay at Dovesnest; that his wound was mortal; that he was dying fast; that he had already made his will, Dorothy Vale and Ebenezer Snipeton having duly witnessed it. This news, sooner than smoke, filled every corner of the house. Great was the stir throughout the Lamb and Star. Tipps, the constable, on the instant, wore a more solemn look of authority; on the instant, summoned St. Giles to prepare for his removal, at the same time

cautiously feeling the handcuffs to learn if they still remained true to their trust. The barber left a pedlar half-shaved to accompany the party; and in a few minutes the horse was put to the cart; and St. Giles, who spoke not a syllable, was seated in it between Tipps and the landlord, Mr. Blink having donned his Sunday coat and waistcoat, that he might pay proper respect to the solemnity; whilst the barber, grasping a cudgel, guarded the culprit from behind. "Stop! shall I take the blunderbuss, for fear?" asked the landlord of Tipps, and eyeing St. Giles. "No," answered the constable, smiling confidently and looking affectionately at the manacle, "no; them dear cuffs never deceived me yet." Crack went the whip—away started the horse; and Tipps, the landlord, and the barber, looked about them freshly, happily; smiling gaily in the morning sun—gaily as though they were carrying a sheep to market—ay, a sheep with a golden fleece.

And the landlady watched the whirling wheels, and with heart-warm wish (poor soul!) wished that the wretch might be hanged, yes, fifty feet high. And Becky, the maid, in her deep pity, braving the tongue of her mistress, stood sobbing in the road, and then, as suddenly inspired, plucked off one of her old shoes, and flung it after St. Giles, with kindly superstition as she said for luck. "For she know'd it, and could swear it; the poor cretur's hands was as innocent of blood as any babby's." Foolish Becky! By such presumptuous pity—a pity, as Mrs. Blink thought, flying in the face of all respectability, did you fearfully risk the place of maid-of-all-work at a hedge-side hotel; a place worth a certain forty shillings a year, besides the complimentary half-pence.

Return we to Nicholas. Ere Snipeton and Crossbone were well possessed of the news, the cart drove up before the window. "And there is the murderer!" cried Crossbone. "Bless me! there 's no need at all to try that man—there 's every letter of Cain all over the villain's face. A child at the horn-book might spell it. And now they 're going to bring him in. Ha! my fine fellow," added the apothecary, as St. Giles alighted; "there 's a cart you won't get into so quickly, I can tell you. What a bold looking villain! With so much blood upon him, too! A lord's blood, and to look so brazenly! What do you think, Mr. Snipeton?"

Now, Snipeton was not a man of overflowing charity, yet, oddly enough, he looked at St. Giles with placid eyes. The old man, to the scandal of Crossbone, merely said, "Poor fellow! He looks in sad plight. Poor fellow!"

In a few moments, Tipps, the constable, was shown to the presence of the master of Dovesnest. "He was very sorry to

make a hubbub in his honour's house, but as the gentleman was dying, there was no time to be lost afore he swore to the murderer. Sam, from the Lamb and Star, had gone off to the justice to tell him all about it, and in a jiffy Mr. Wattles would be there."

"I think," observed Crossbone, "I think I had better see how my distinguished patient is." With this, the apothecary, making himself up for the important task, softly quitted the room.

"And you 're sure you have the right man?" asked Snipeton of the constable.

"Never made a blunder in all my life, sir," answered Tipps, with a mild pride.

"Mr. Justice Wattles," cried Nicholas, big with the words, and showing in the magistrate.

"Mr. Snipeton," said Wattles, "this business is—"

But the Justice was suddenly stopped by the doctor. Crossbone rushed in, slightly pale and much agitated, exclaiming, "The patient 's gone!"

"Not dead!" cried Snipeton, exultingly, and rubbing his hands.

"Dead? no! But he 's gone—left the house—vanished;—come and see!" Crossbone, followed by all, rushed to the room in which, some minutes before, lay the murdered St. James.

He was gone! All were astonished. So great was the surprise, not a word was spoken; until Dorothy Vale, who had crept into the room, with her cold, calm voice, addressed the apothecary. Pointing to the stains in the couch, she said, "If you please, sir can you give me nothing to take out that blood?"

CHAPTER XIV.

"And now," thinks the reader, "St. Giles is free. There is no charge against him; he is not the murderer men, in his wretchedness, took him for. St. James, with his injuries upon him, has withdrawn himself; and once again the world lies wide before St. Giles." Not so. There still remains, to his confusion, a hard accuser. St. Giles is destitute. In the teeming, luxurious county of Kent, amidst God's promises of plenty to man, he is a guilty interloper. He may not grasp a handful of the soil, he cannot purchase one blade of wheat; he is a pauper and a vagrant; a foul presence in the world's garden, and must therefore be punished for his intrusion. Every rag he carries is an accusing tongue: he is destitute and wandering: he has strayed into the paradise of the well-to-do, and must be sharply reproved for his

whereabout. And therefore St. Giles will be committed for a season to the county gaol, as a rogue and vagabond. The roguery is not proved upon him, but it has been shown that whilst decent people have goose-beds and weather-proof chambers, he, at the best, has straw and a barn. It is, too, made a misdemeanor against mother earth to sleep upon her naked breast, with only the heavens above the sleeper; and as St. Giles had often so offended—he could not deny the iniquity—he was, we say, committed to gaol by Justice Wattles, as rogue and vagabond. Now, to punish a man for having nothing, is surely a sport invented by Beelzebub for the pleasure of the rich; yes, to whip a rascal for his rags is to pay flattering homage to cloth of gold. Nothing was proved against St. Giles but want; which, being high treason against the majesty of property, that large offence might be reasonably supposed to contain every other.

"Something, I've no doubt, will be brought against him," said Justice Wattles; "in the mean time, he stands committed as a rogue and vagabond." And Tipps, the constable, led away his prisoner, preceded by the host of the Lamb and Star; whilst the dispirited barber very dolorously expressed his disappointment, "that he left his business and all, and only for a ragamuffin as wasn't worth salt! If he hadn't thought him a murderer, he'd never have troubled his head with such rubbish." "No, and you'd never have had my cart," said the landlord to Tipps. "I thought the fellow would turn out somebody; and he's nothing but a vagrom. Come up!" cried the Lamb and Star; and sharply whipping his horse to ease his own bad temper, he drove off, the barber vainly hallooing for a seat in the vehicle. Whereupon, Constable Tipps, casting a savagely inquiring look at St. Giles's handcuffs, with an oath bade his prisoner move on, and then railed at his own particular planet, that had troubled him with such varmint.

Nevertheless, although St. Giles's hands were white, murder had done its worst. As yet none, save the homicide, already blasted with the knowledge, knew of the deed. How lovelily the sun shone; how beautiful all things looked and beamed in its light: the lark sang, like a freed spirit, in the dome of heaven: and yet, beneath it, lay a terrible witness of the guilt of man; a mute and bloody evidence of another Cain! St. Giles, however, was on his way to the county gaol, ere the deed was discovered. Not willing to give an account of himself, he was committed to imprisonment and hard labour in punishment of his destitution. That he was not in addition whipped for his poverty, testified strongly to the injudicious clemency of Justice Wattles. Such mercy went far to encourage rags and tatters.

Leave we for a while the desolate home of Dovesnest. Leave we that miserable old man, Snipeton, writhing at his hearth; now striving to seek for hope, for confidence, in the meek and wretched face of his wife, and now starting at her look as at a dagger's point.

A few hours had passed, and again the Lamb and Star was a scene of tumult. And this time, there was no doubt of the atrocity. It was now impossible that the worthy folks, assembled in the hostelry, could be tricked into useless sympathy. There was now no doubt that a man was killed; and if St. Giles had escaped the charge of former homicide, why such escape only the more strongly proved his guilt of the new wickedness. "He 'll be hanged, after all!" cried the landlord, with the air of a man foretasting an enjoyment. "The villain! he was born for the gibbet," said the barber; "if I wouldn't walk over glass bottles to see him hanged, I 'm not a Christian." Whilst the barber and others were thus vehemently declaiming their Christianity, there arrived at the Lamb and Star a most important person. Up to that hour, he had been a rustic of average insignificance; but he suddenly found himself a creature of considerable interest—a man, heartily welcomed, as a boon and a treasure. This happy man was one Pyefinch; and was known to the surrounding country as a mole-catcher of tolerable parts. It was he who had discovered the body of the murdered man: and had he discovered some great blessing to the human family, it is very questionable whether he would have been so heartily welcomed by many of its members. It had, however, been his good fortune—for we must still call it so—to light upon the body of Farmer Willis, bloody and stark in his own meadow; and again and again was he pressed to rehearse the tale, whilst mugs of ale rewarded the story-teller. Instantly was Pyefinch fastened upon by Mrs. Blink, and it was hard to deny such a woman anything. After short preparation, did the mole-catcher—stimulated by malt and hops—begin his terrible history.

"Why, you see, it was in this manner," said Pyefinch. "I was a goin' along by Cow Meadow, 'bout four in the mornin' wi' my dog Thistle, just to look arter the snares. Cruel sight of varmint there be along that meadow to be sure. Well, I was a thinking of nothing—or what I was a thinking on, for I scorns a lie, is nothin' to nobody. Well, goin' along in this manner, Thistle running afore me, and ahind me, and a both sides o' me—"

"Never mind, Thistle," cried the landlady, "come to the murder, Tom."

"Ax your pardon, missus. I shall have to tell all this story at 'sizes; I know what them chaps, the lawyers be, to bother a poor

man who 's no scholard ; so I 've made my mind up, never to tell the story ; but after one way ; then I 'm cocksure not to be caught off my legs nohow." And Pyefinch drank, doubtless, to his own sagacity.

"Very right, Tom," cried the landlord ; and then he turned with knit eyebrows to his wife. "Be quiet, will you ? like all women ; want the kernel without cracking the nut. Be quiet." And Blink gave a conjugal growl. "Go on, Tom."

"As I was a saying," continued the mole-catcher, "Thistle was a running afore me, and ahind me, and a both sides o' me—and barking as though he wished he could talk ; just to say, how comfortable he felt, now that the spring was come—for depend upon it, dumb creturs have their notions of spring just as well as we—well, where was I ?"

"Thistle was barking," prompted the landlady, fidgetting and casting about impatient looks.

"To be sure he was. Well, all on a sudden he held his tongue ; he was then a good way on afore me, down in the pitch o' the field. I thought nothing o' that ; when on a sudden he give cry agin, but quite a different bark to t' other. That didn't stagger me, neither ; for I thought he 'd lit on a hedgehog ; and of all varmint o' the earth, Thistle hates a hedgehog ; ha ! worse than pison, that he do. Well, arter a while, Thistle runs up to me. You should ha' seen that dog," cried the mole-catcher, rising bolt from his seat, "his face was as full o' sense as any Christian's : his eyes ! if they didn't burn in 's head like any blacksmith's coals ; and his jaw was dropt as if he couldn't shut it, it were so stiff wi' wunder—and all his hairs upon his back right away down to the end o' his tail stood up like hedge-stakes—and he looked at me, as much as to say—'what do you think ?'"

"Bless us, and save us !" cried the landlady, wondering at the discrimination of the dog.

"I didn't make him no answer," said the mole-catcher, "but walks on arter him, he looking behind him now and then, and shaking his head sometimes terrible, until I come to the pitch o' the field ; and there—oh, Lord !" Here Pyefinch seized the mug, and, emptying it, was newly strengthened. "There, I saw Master Willis in his best clothes—and you know he was always particlar like in them matters—there I saw him, as at first I thought, fast asleep, looking so blessed happy, you can't think. Howsumever, Thistle puts his nose to the grass, and sets up sich a howl, and then I sees a pool of blood, and then I run away as fast as legs 'ud carry me, right away to the farm. Well, they 'd never looked for Master Willis. They 'd thought he 'd stayed at Canterbury all night ; and there he was, poor soul ! killed like a

sheep in his own field. Terrible, isn't it? and Pyefinch presented the empty mug to the landlady, who, the tale being told, set the vessel down again.

"It 's the smugglers as has done it," cried Becky. "They owed him a grudge since autumn, when he found their tubs among his corn; it 's the smugglers, as I 'm a sinner."

"The smugglers!—poor souls!"—said Mrs. Blink, who, though a licensed dealer in spirits, had, strangely enough, a large sympathy for contraband traders; "they wouldn't hurt a lamb. It 's that villain that slept in the barn; and I only hope that you, Miss Trollop, knew nothing of the business."

"Me!" exclaimed Becky, "me know anything!" Had it been any other than her mistress, Becky would have been too happy to vindicate the strength and volubility of her tongue. The woman rose strongly within her, and tempted her to speak: but she thought of her forty shillings per annum; and so the woman railed not, but cried.

"And how does Master Robert take it?" cried the landlord.

"Why, wonderful, considering," said the mole-catcher. "A little dashed at first, in course."

"And he that was so merry, too, at the dance! Well, it is a world to live in," moralised the barber. "He stood ale all round, and little thought that he 'd no uncle. He danced with every gal above stairs, and never dreamed o' what was going on in Cow Meadow. He 'll have the old man's land o' course? Poor soul! He 'll feel it if anybody do."

"Wakes and fares won't be no worse for Master Robert," said the landlord. "That is, supposing this matter don't steady him. But, to be sure, what a noble soul it is! Well, if we could cry till the sea run over, it wouldn't bring back the old man; and so here 's long life and good fortin to his heir. And a rare night we shall have of it—that is, when the mourning 's over and it 's all proper; yes; a rare night we shall have at the Lamb and Star."

"I wonder who he 'll marry?" cried the landlady.

"Nobody," averred Mr. Blink; "he 's too free a spirit—too noble a cretur. Besides, he knows too much of life. She must be a sharp thing—yes, she must get up very early for mushrooms, who 'd get Bob Willis."

Of course, suspicion followed St. Giles to the gaol: but although his poverty, his houseless condition, and, more, his refusal to give any account of himself, fixed him in the minds of many as the murderer, there was no point, no circumstance (and many were the examinations of the vagrant,) that could connect him with the deed. It was an especial annoyance to several worthy people that nothing, as they said, could be brought home to St. Giles. He

seemed, above all creatures, the very creature whom such an atrocity would fit; and yet the failure of all evidence was as complete as to certain folks it was distressing. However, there was one comfort. St. Giles was fast in prison as a rogue and vagabond; and, in good time, sufficient facts might rise up against him. He had been set down to be hanged; and in the cheerful faith of those who had judged him, it was impossible he should escape a doom so peculiarly fitted to him. Hence, St. Giles remained in gaol, like a fine haunch in a larder, to be some day feasted on.

A week had passed, and still justice was baffled. The murdered man slept in his grave, and still his murderer walked the free earth. Justice Wattles had a double motive for the restless zeal which animated him in his search for the culprit: there was his character as a magistrate; and, more; there was his feeling of kinship towards the victim, Farmer Willis being his brother-in-law. Hence, Justice Wattles, indefatigable in his purpose, called at Dovesnest. A most unwelcome visitor was his worship to Ebenezer Snipeton, then preparing to depart from his hermitage for the din of London; and at the very moment the magistrate was announced, rehearsing a farewell speech to Clarissa; a speech that, until her husband's return, should be to her as a charm, an amulet, to preserve her from the temptations of evil spirits. Snipeton had compelled himself to believe the story of his wife, avouched, too, as it was by Mrs. Wilton. He had tyrannised over his heart that it should give credence to what he fain would hope! And so, he would leave home, a happy husband, convinced, assured past all suspicion, of the unbroken faith, the enduring loyalty of his devoted wife. It was better so to feed himself, than yield to the despair that would destroy him. Better to be duped by falsehood, than crushed by truth. It was accident—mere accident—that had brought St. James to his house; and that, too, in such a plight, it was impossible that Clarissa could deny him hospitable usage. And with this thought, a load was lifted from the old man's heart, and he would—yes, he would be happy. Snipeton was wandering in this Paradise of Fools, when the name of Justice Wattles called him home.

"Good morning, Mr. Snipeton—a dreadful matter this, sir—a dreadful calamity to fall upon a respectable family—a startling end, sir, for my poor brother,—so punctual and so excellent a man," were the first words of the Justice.

"Very terrible," answered Snipeton. "I have already heard all the particulars," and he pulled on his glove.

"Not all, sir—I'm afraid not all," said Wattles. "That young gentleman who was brought to your house—"

"Well?"

"He's a young nobleman, to be sure; but still it's odd, Mr. Snipeton; I say, it's odd," and the Justice leered at Ebenezer.

"Speak out, man;" cried Snipeton: and the Justice pulled himself up at the abruptness of the command. "What of him?"

"Why, the truth is, Mr. Snipeton, that young nobleman has been seen lurking about here very much of late. That's odd. Do you know what business brings him to these parts?"

"How should I know?" exclaimed Snipeton, looking fiercely at the Justice, as at one who would read the secrets of his soul.

"To be sure; perhaps not," said Wattles, "and yet you see it's odd: he was brought here wounded, the very night my poor brother—the most respectable man in Kent—what a sort of stain it is upon the family!—the very night he met his fate. You didn't know, then, that the young nobleman used to hang about these quarters?"

"Justice Wattles," replied Snipeton, "if as a magistrate you would examine me, I must attend your summons. My house is not a court."

"Certainly not—certainly not," answered the Justice, suddenly taking up his dignity. "I ask your pardon; of course, this matter will be sifted elsewhere—thoroughly sifted. Only believing the young nobleman to be your friend—"

"He's no friend of mine," said Snipeton, sullenly.

"Well, a friend of Mrs. Snipeton's—oh, my dear sir! don't look at me in that way—I meant no offence, none whatever; I meant an acquaintance—a visitor of Mrs. Snipeton's, nothing more. But, of course, the law can reach him—of course, he can be made to explain everything—lord as he is. Still, being a friend of yours—I mean of your wife's—I intended to show him some consideration. Nevertheless, as you say your house is not a court, why good morning, Mr. Snipeton—good morning." And saying this, Justice Wattles, with all the dignity he could compass, quitted the master of Dovesnest. Poor Snipeton! but now he was blowing bubbles of hope, so brightly tinted; but now they were floating about him in a sunny sky, and now they were broken, vanished!

As Justice Wattles, with a flushed countenance, crossed the threshold of Dovesnest, he was encountered by Nicholas, the sole serving-man of Snipeton. "Bless me! your worship," cried Nicholas, "here's luck in meeting you—here's a something as I was first going to show master, and then to bring to you," and with this, the man presented to the magistrate an old black leather pocket-book.

"God save us!" cried Wattles, and he trembled violently—"where did this come from?"

"I found it in a hedge—just as it is—I haven't looked at it—in a hedge by Pinkton's Corner," said the man.

Wattles, with great emotion, opened the book—turned deadly pale—suddenly closed it again, and with a faint, forced smile at his white lips, said—"Oh, it 's nothing—nothing at all. But you may as well leave it with me, Nicholas: if it 's inquired for, I shall have it ready. You know it 's in good hands, Nicholas; and take this for your honesty; and until I call upon you, say nothing at all about it—nothing at all." With this, the Justice unconsciously made a low bow to the serving-man, and walked a few steps rapidly on. Suddenly he paused, and calling the man to him, gave him a guinea. "For your honesty, Nicholas—though the thing isn't worth a groat—still for your honesty; and as I've told you, till you hear from me, you need say nothing of the matter." Nicholas, well pleased to sell his silence on such terms, pocketed the guinea, and with a knowing nod at the Justice, went his way. Wattles walked hurriedly on, turning down a lane that skirted the Devil's Elbow. The old man trembled from head to foot; his eyes wandered, and his lips moved with unspoken words. Now he ran, and now staggered and tottered down the lane; and at length paused midway and looked cautiously about him. He then drew forth the pocket-book, and with deepest misery in his face, proceeded to search it. It contained nothing save a large gold ring, set with a cornelian. As he held it to the light, the old man sighed; then tears fast and thick fell from his eyes, and he sank down upon a bank, and, hiding his face in his hands, groaned most piteously. "God pardon him!" at length he cried—"but Robert 's done it: Robert 's killed the old man; it 's Robert's ring—my Bible oath to it—his ring; and the Lord has brought it to witness against him. I was sure he had done it; no, no, not sure,—but I feared it, and—merciful heaven!—to butcher his own flesh and blood—to kill his own uncle!" Again the old man wept and sobbed, and wrung his hands in the very impotence of sorrow. "And what am I to do? Am I to hang him? Heaven shield us! Hang a Willis!—'Twould be horrible. And then the disgrace to the family—the oldest in Kent! What shall I do—what shall I do?" again and again cried the Justice. "The murderer must not escape; but then, to hang him!—the respectability of the family—the respectability of the family!" And thus was the old man perplexed. His horror of the deed was great; he wept earnest, truthful tears over the fate of his brother-in-law, a worthy, honest soul, whose greatest weakness had been, indeed, undue indulgence of his wretched assassin. All the horror, the ingratitude of his crime would present itself to the mind of the Justice, who would for

the moment determine to denounce the homicide: and then his pride was touched; he thought of the shame, the lasting ignominy, as he deemed it, that would cling to the family, and thus held in doubt, suspense—he would in his weakness weep and pray of heaven to be supported and directed. "Robert 's a monster that pollutes the earth," he would cry—"he must, he shall be hanged." And then the stern Justice would clasp his hands, and moan, and mutter—"But the disgrace to the family—the disgrace to the family!" And thus, unresolved, days passed, and Justice Wattles said no word of the pocket-book of the murdered man—breathed no syllable of the damning evidence, supplied by the ring, against his nephew; who, it appeared, had been wrought to the commission of the act, by the refusal of the old man to supply the means of his profuse expense, cast away as it was upon the idle and the profligate throughout the country. The old man had returned from Canterbury fair, as his assassin thought, with a large sum of money in his possession. The murderer, ready dressed for the village festival, had awaited his victim; had accomplished the act; and then, with hottest speed, made for the Lamb and Star, to join in the revelry of the merry-makers. More of this, however, as we proceed in our history.

And now old Snipeton must say farewell to his young wife. How beautiful she looked! What an air of truth and purity was around her! How her mute meekness rebuked her husband's doubts! She wanly smiled, and the old man reproached himself that for a moment he could suspect that angel sweetness. He had taken new resolution from her trustful gentleness. That smile of innocence had determined him. He would quit trade: retire from London. He had enough, more than enough, of worldly means; and he would no longer separate himself from such a wife; but—his present ventures realised—he would retire to Dovesnest, and there pass away a life, dedicating every moment, every feeling to the better treasure that there enriched him. Henceforth he would destroy, annihilate, every rising thought that should do her honour injury; he would be a confiding, happy husband. Nothing should peril the great felicity in store for him. With this thought, this fooling of the heart, he kissed his wife; and though she met his touch with lips of ice, he could not, would not, feel their coldness; but serenely left his home, and for many a mile upon the road strove to possess himself with the great assurance that he was still an honoured, happy husband. Oh, it was a sin, a great wickedness done to heaven's brightest truth to doubt it.

Poor old man! Wretched huckster! Tricked and betrayed in the bargain he had purchased: bought with so much money from

the priest. Willingly befooled by hope, he could not see the desperate calmness, the firm, cold resolution that possessed his young wife at the time of parting. At that moment, as she believed, she looked upon her husband for the last time: in that moment, it was her comfort that she bade farewell to him who made her life a daily misery—a daily lie. She had taken counsel with herself, and, come what might, would end the loathsome hypocrisy, that, like a foul disease, consumed her. He quitted her. She wept; and then a ray of comfort brightened her face: and she moved with lightened step, a thing of new-found liberty. She sought to be alone; and yet—it was very strange—that old house-keeper, Mrs. Wilton, would still find an excuse to follow her: still, with questioning face, would look upon her. The woman could not know her resolution? Impossible. Yet still, like a spy, the hireling of her husband, she would watch her. And then, at times, the woman gazed so mournfully at her; answered her with such strange emotion in her voice, with such familiar tenderness, she knew not how to rebuke her.

"And my master returns in a week?" said Mrs. Wilton; "a long time for one who loves a wife so dearly."

"Loves me!" answered Clarissa with a shudder, which she strove not to disguise. "Yes; there it is—he loves me."

"A great happiness, if wisely thought of," said the housekeeper, with cold calm looks. "A great happiness."

"No doubt, if wisely thought of," rejoined Clarissa; then, with a sigh, she added: "How hard the task of wisdom! But we will not talk of this now, Mrs. Wilton; I have another matter to speak of: I am kept such a prisoner here"—and Clarissa smiled, and tried to talk gaily—"that for once I am determined to play truant. Would you believe it? I have scarcely seen Canterbury. I have a mighty wish to visit the Cathedral; I hear it is so beautiful—so awful."

"I would you had spoken of this to Mr. Snipeton," said the housekeeper gravely.

"And wherefore? To have my wish refused? To be sentenced a prisoner to the house; or, at most, to the limits of the garden? No: I know his anxiety, his tenderness, his love for me, as you would say—therefore, if I would go at all, I must go unknown to my lord and owner."

"Lord and husband," you would say, observed Mrs. Wilton, looking full at Clarissa.

"Owner is sometimes a better word; at least, I feel it so. And therefore, as I am determined on my pilgrimage—"

"Very well, it must be made," said Mrs. Wilton. "Whenever you will, I will be ready to accompany you."

"Oh no; I will not take you from the house: it is necessary that you should remain. Dorothy is so dull and slow, I should not feel happy to leave her alone. Let Nicholas order a chaise, and he—yes, he can attend me. Now, no words, good Mrs. Wilton; for once I must have my way—for once you must not hope to deny me."

"And when, Mrs. Snipeton," added the housekeeper, "when do you go?"

"Oh, to-morrow," answered Clarissa, with forced vivacity.

Mrs. Wilton looked at the girl with piercing eyes; then slowly, gravely asked—"And when return?"

"Oh, the next day," and the blood flushed in Clarissa's face as the words fell from her.

"No, no, no: that day would never come; your burning face, your looks, tell me it would not."

"Mrs. Wilton!" cried Clarissa, who vainly strove to look commanding, dignified; to play the mistress to the presumptuous menial. "Mrs. Wilton, by what right do you thus question my word?"

"By the right of love; yes, by the love I bear you, lady," answered the housekeeper. "I know your heart; can see the wound within it. I know the grief that daily wears you; but, with the knowledge of a deeper wound—of grief more terrible—a grief made of remorse and shame—I implore you, leave not your home."

"And why not? Since you know the bondage I endure—the loathsomeness of life I bear about me—the cancer of the heart that tortures me—the degradation of everything that makes life good and holy,—wherefore should I not break the chain that body and soul enslaves me? Tell me this," exclaimed Clarissa; and her face grew deathly pale; and her whole form rose and dilated with the passion that, fury-like, possessed her.

"I have told you," said Mrs. Wilton,—"for the more terrible grief that follows."

"Can it be sharper, more consuming, than that I now endure?" asked Clarissa, smiling bitterly.

"Yes—yes!" was the answer, solemnly uttered.

"How know you this?" asked the young wife; and she looked with new and curious interest at the woman fast changing before her. Changing. Her face always so calm, so self-possessed, so statue-like, relaxed and beamed with a sweet yet mournful look. It seemed as though to that time she had only played a part—that now, the true woman would reveal herself. Clarissa was surprised, subdued, by the new aspect of her housekeeper.

"You ask me, how I know this. It is a brief tale: and I will

tell you. I knew a maid sold like yourself—sold is the word—in lawful wedlock. The man who purchased her was good and honourable; one of the men whom the world accounts as its best citizens; plain, worthy, and dispassionate; a person most respectable. He would not, in his daily bargains, have wronged his neighbour of a doit. An upright, a most punctual man. And yet he took a wife without a heart. He loved the hollow thing that, like a speaking image, vowed in the face of God to do that she knew she never could fulfil, to love and honour him; and he, that just, good man, smiled with great happiness upon the pretty perjurer; and took her to his bosom as the treasure of the world. True, at times he had his doubts—his sad misgivings. He would look in his wife's face—would meet her cold, obedient eyes—and sometimes wonder when a heart would grow within her. He had married her, believing in such growth; it was his wisdom—his knowledge of mankind and the world—to be assured of it. And so they lived for three long years together; the chain of wedlock growing heavier with every heavy day. She became a mother. Even that new woman's life—that sudden knowledge that opens in the heart an unimagined fount of love—failed to harmonise her soul with him who was her child's father. Still they jarred; or, at best, were silent towards each other. I will hurry to the close. She left him; worse, she left her child. That silver link, that precious bond that should have held her even to scorn, unkindness, misery,—with sacrilegious act she broke. She left her husband for one who should have been her husband. You do not listen to me?"

"Yes—yes—yes," cried Clarissa—"every word; each syllable. Go on."

"For a few months she lived a mockery of happiness. A year or two passed, and then her lover left her, and she stood alone in the world, clothed with her harlot shame. It was then, indeed, she felt the mother: then, what should have been her joys were turned to agonies; and conscience, daily conscience, made her look within a glass to see a monster there. Oh, she has told me, again and again, has told me! The look, the voice of childhood—with all its sweetness, all its music—was to her as an accusing angel that frowned, and told her of her fall."

"And she never saw her child?" asked Clarissa.

"For years she knew not where to seek it. At length, accident discovered to her the place of its abode. And then the babe—the motherless innocence—had become almost a woman."

"And then the mother sought her?"

"No. Her husband still lived; she did not dare attempt it. Her child! How knew she that that child had not been taught

to think her mother in the grave? And more; the mother had foregone her noblest claim at that poor little one's best need—and could the wanton come back again to urge it? Therefore, unknown, she watched her; and, like a thief, stole glances of the precious creature of her blood—her only comfort, and her worst reproach. The girl became a wife; her father died, and then—"

"And then?" repeated Clarissa, as the woman paused in the fulness of her emotion.

"And then the mother dared not reveal herself. As servant, she entered her daughter's house, that, all unknown, she might feed her daily life with looking at her." The woman paused; and, with clasped hands, looked with imploring anguish in the face of Clarissa. That look told all: Clarissa, with a scream, leapt to her feet, and hung at her mother's neck.

"Be warned—be warned," cried the woman, and like a dead thing, she sank in a chair.

CHAPTER XV.

To the astonishment, the rage, and indignation of the neighbourhood, Robert Willis had been apprehended, charged with the murder of his uncle. After such audacity on the part of the law, no man held himself safe. The whole country rang with the charge; the whole country more or less sympathised with the innocent victim of the tyranny of justice. It was impossible to associate the jovial, warm-hearted, merry-maker with any wrong; so wholly had he won the hearts of all by his many feats of rustic skill, his many qualities of good fellowship. The men admired him for his athletic daring; and the women for his noble figure, his ruddy face, black whiskers, and very white teeth. To be sure, he had had his follies; now and then he had played the bully, and the small voice of detraction added, the black-leg: he had moreover broken a heart or so: but he had never wanted money to pay a treat; and young men would be young men, was the charitable creed of the treated. Nevertheless, it was impossible for justice to close her ears to rumours that, first muttered, grew louder and louder. Willis had been seen hurrying from Cow Meadow at the time that—according to evidence—the murder must have been committed. He had moreover paid many debts of late; had been seen with much money in his hands; and there was a strange, forced gaiety in his manner that showed him restless, ill at ease. In fine, although Justice Wattles—the prisoner's relative, and the possessor of the dead man's pocket-book—loudly protested against

the indignity offered to his kinsman; although he eloquently put it to his brother magistrates, whether it was in the circle of probability for one so respectably born and bred, to shed the blood of his own relation,—Robert Willis was committed, charged with the wilful murder of Arthur Willis. And then Justice Wattles said it was best it should be so: it was the shortest, clearest way, to stop the mouths of slanderers, and to show to the world the innocence, and, above all, the respectability of his kinsman. Yet were there people who wondered at the change so suddenly worked in the Justice. His face, before so round and red, became shrunk and yellow; and then he would strive to look so happy—would laugh at every other word he spoke; would prophesy with such enjoyment the triumph of his brave, his much-wronged relative.

And so the vagabond St. Giles and the gay and generous Robert Willis were brought together. In the very good old times of our history, there was deeper and better homage paid to the well-to-do who, somehow, had done ill and was imprisoned therefore, than in these our sterner days, when the successors of Blueskins and Sheppards, no longer hold their levees in gaol lobbies, and fine ladies may not prattle with felons. However lovely and interesting may be the doomed man to the female heart, his fascinations are to be contemplated only through the filmy medium of the newspapers, and not, as in those very good and much-lamented old times, hob and nob with the housebreaker and murderer. Hence, Robert Willis lived in happier days. Hence, by the grace of money and station, had he many little indulgencies which softened the rigour of captivity. Wine and brandy came to him like good genii through the prison bars, and by their magic gave to stone walls a comfortable, jolly aspect; again placed the prisoner in a tavern; again surrounded him with the best of fellows; hearts of gold!

It was yet early morning, and Willis, flushed with drink, walked the court-yard with St. Giles; for whom, at their first meeting, he had shown a strange interest. How changed was he from the merry-maker who, but for a few moments, was before the reader at the Lamb and Star! He seemed to have grown bigger—burlier. His face was full-blooded; his eyebrows shagged and ragged; his eyes flashed to and fro, dwelling upon no object; and then he would laugh loudly, hollowly. He walked the court-yard, talking to St. Giles; and now and then slapping him on the shoulder, to the wonder of other more respectable prisoners, who much marvelled that a gentleman like master Robert Willis could take up with such a vagabond. And so they walked: and by degrees Willis laughed less, and spoke in a lower tone; and it was plain—from the agitation of his comrade—that he spoke of something

strange and terrible. At length St. Giles stopped short, and cried, "I will hear no more—not a word more, I tell you. God forgive you!"

"Why, what 's the matter, fool—butter-heart?" cried Willis, "I thought you a man, and you 're a cur. Ha! ha! all 's one for that;" and again Willis laughed, and pointed scornfully at St. Giles, as—with face aghast—he walked to the further end of the court. Willis was about to follow him, when he was accosted by one of the turnkeys.

"Master Willis, here 's Mr. Montecute Crawley, the lawyer, come to talk to you about your defence. He 's in a great hurry; so, if you please, you must make haste: he 's so much to do, he can't stay for nobody." And the turnkey only spoke the truth of the absorbing business of Mr. Montecute Crawley; to whose silver tongue the world owed the liberty of many a ruffian. Happy was the evil-doer whose means might purchase the good offices of Mr. Montecute Crawley! There was no man at the bar who could so completely extract the stain of blood from a murderer. Had he defended Sawny Bean, dipped a hundred times in infanticide, he would have presented him to the court as a shepherd with the bloom and fragrance of Arcady upon him. Worthy man! What a constitution had Mr. Montecute Crawley, to stand the wear and tear of his own feelings, racked, agonised, as they always were for his innocent, his much-persecuted client, the homicide or highwayman at the bar! Happily, his emotion was always so very natural, and so very intense, that again and again it touched the bosoms of the jury, who could not—simple creatures!—but believe so eloquent, so earnest a gentleman, when he not only vouched for the innocence of the unfortunate accused, but wept a shower of tears in testimony thereof. Tears, in fact, were Mr. Montecute Crawley's great weapons: but he had too true a notion of their value to use them save on extraordinary occasions. With all his tenderness, he had great powers of self-restraint; and, therefore, never dropt a tear upon any brief that brought him less than five hundred guineas. He had heard of "the luxury of woe," and was determined that with him at least the luxury should bear its proper price. His coarse and stony-hearted brethren at the bar had, in the envy and brutality of their souls, nicknamed Mr. Montecute Crawley, the watering-pot. But he—good, silver-tongued man—heeded not the miserable jest. He talked and wept, and wept and talked, as though he felt assured that all the world believed his words and tears, and that the angels knew them to be only counterfeit.

And Robert Willis was now to interest the sympathies of Mr.

Crawley, who had been paid the full weeping price—the fee being, as a junior counsel said, up to water-mark. The prisoner and his counsel were private together; and, as the accused went through his simple tale, it was delightful to perceive the intelligence that beamed in Mr. Montecute Crawley's eye, as though he spied a flaw, no wider than a spider's thread, in the indictment; and then for a moment he would place his ample brow—writ and overwrit with so many acts of Parliament—in his snow-pure hand, meditating a legal escape. "That 's enough," said Mr. Crawley, abruptly stopping the prisoner: "I 've made up my mind; yes, I see it at once; an alibi, of course; an alibi. You were at the dance at the Lamb and Star: you 've witnesses—yes, I know—Mr. Swag, your attorney, has told me all, and——"

"And you think I shall get over it?" asked Willis, looking up with unabashed face at his defender. Mr. Montecute Crawley slightly nodded his head; whereupon the prisoner, with grossest familiarity, offered his hand. Mr. Crawley knew what was due to the dignity of his profession; he, therefore, looked frozenly at the prisoner, rebuking him by that look into a proper sense of his infamy, and at the same time asserting his own forensic consequence. "Meant no offence, sir," said the reprobate, "but as I thought we met as friends, and as Master Wattles has promised to come down well if you get me off, why I thought we might as well shake hands on the bargain."

"It is not necessary," said Mr. Crawley, with a new stock of dignity. "And now I think you have told me all? I hope so, because I can give no further time to see you; and therefore I hope, for your sake, I now know all? You understand me?"

Innocent murderer—unsophisticated assassin! He did not understand his best defender. Deceived by what he thought a cordiality of voice, a look of interest, in Mr. Montecute Crawley—and suddenly feeling that it would doubtless be for his own especial benefit if he laid bare his heart—that black, bad thing—before so able, so excellent a gentleman, Robert Willis thought that he owed him every confidence, and would, therefore, without further ceremony, discharge the debt. "Why, no, sir," he said, with the air of a man prepared to be praised for his ingenuousness,—"no, sir, I hav'n't told you all. You see, uncle—I must say it—had been a good sort of a fellow to me in his time. but somehow, he got plaguy cranky of late; wouldn't come down with the money nohow. And I put it to you, sir, who know what life is,—what 's a young fellow like me to do without money? Well, the long and the short of it is this,—I shot the old chap, and that 's the truth."

If virtue could have peeped into that prison, could at that

moment have beheld the face of Mr. Montecute Crawley, would she not have embraced—have wept over her champion—even as he had often wept on her account? He started from the confessed homicide, as though Cain himself had risen from beside him. "Scoundrel! monster! villain!" he exclaimed with passion, that must have been genuine, it was so violent.

"Bless me!" cried the prisoner. "I hope you 're not offended. You wanted to know all, sir."

"Not that—not that, miscreant!" and Mr. Montecute Crawley paced up and down in the very greatest distress. "Monster,—I leave you to your fate: I 'll not stain my hands with such a brief. No—never—never."

"You 'll not do that, sir, I 'm sure," said the murderer. "Too much of a gentleman for that. 'Specially when the Justice has come down so handsomely. And I know him; that 's not all he'll do, if you get me off."

"Get you off!" cried Mr. Montecute Crawley with a disgust that did the very highest and deepest honour to his heart.—"What! let loose a wild beast—a man-tiger into the world. Monster—miscreant—miscreant!" With all Mr. Crawley's enviable command of abuse, he lacked vituperation wherewith to express the intensity of his loathing; and he therefore quitted the murderer with a look of inexpressible scorn; Robert Willis having, in his imagination, the very clearest view of the gallows, with himself in the cart, wending to his inevitable destination. He was given up by that miracle of an orator, Mr. Montecute Crawley, and there was nothing left him but the hangman.

Ingenuous Robert Willis—unsophisticated homicide! Little knew that simple murderer the magnanimity of the lawyer, who would forget the imprudence of the blood-shedder in pity for the erring fellow-creature. Besides, Mr. Montecute Crawley, in his great respect for the intellectual cravings of the public, could not consent to deprive a crowded court of his expected speech: an oration that, as he knew, would impart very considerable enjoyment to his auditors, and, possibly achieve a lasting glory for himself. Therefore, possessed of the knowledge of the prisoner's crime, it would be the business, the pride of Mr. Crawley to array him in a garb of innocence: though, everlastingly stained with blood, it would be the fame of the orator to purify the assassin, returning him back to the world snow-white and sweetened. And, with this determination, when the day of trial came, Mr. Montecute Crawley entered the court, amidst the flattering admiration of all assembled. What a solemn man he looked! What a champion of truth—what an earnest orator in the cause of innocence—with every line in his face a swelling lie!

And the day of trial came. St. James sat upon the bench in close neighbourhood to the Judge. The court was crowded. Ladies had dressed themselves as for a gala; and when the prisoner—habited with scrupulous neatness—appeared at the bar, there was a murmur from the fair that at once acquitted so handsome, so finely-made a man, of such a naughty crime. It was impossible that with such a face—such very fine eyes—such wavy, silken hair, and above all with such a self-assuring smile—it was impossible that such a creature could be stained with an old man's blood. And then the gentlewomen looked from the prisoner to the prisoner's counsel, and beheld in his sweet gravity, his beautiful composure, an assurance that he, that eloquent and sympathetic pleader, was possessed as with the consciousness of his own soul, of the guiltlessness of that oppressed, that handsome young man; and would therefore plead with the voice and sublime fervour of a superior spirit for the accused at the bar. Men of every degree thronged the court. The gentry—the yeomen—the rustics of the country; all prepossessed for the prisoner. And many were the greetings and shakings of the hand exchanged with the prisoner's kinsman, Justice Wattles, who tried to look hopeful, and to speak of the trial as nothing more than a ceremony, necessary to stop the mouth of slanderous wickedness. And so, restless and inwardly sick at heart and trembling, the Justice looked smilingly about the court: but never looked at the prisoner at the bar. The prisoner gazed searchingly at the jury, and his eyes brightened when he saw that Simon Blink, landlord of the Lamb and Star, was foreman of the twelve.

The trial began. One witness swore that on the evening of the murder he heard a gun fired; and immediately he saw the prisoner at the bar rush from the direction of Cow Meadow. The ball had been extracted from the murdered man, and found to fit a gun, the prisoner's property, subsequently discovered in the farmhouse. Every face in the court—even the face of Mr. Montecute Crawley—fell, darkened at the direct, straightforward evidence of the witness. He was then handed over to be dealt with by the prisoner's counsel. What awful meaning possessed his features, when he rose to turn inside out the witness! What lightning in his eye—what a weight of scorn at his lip—what thunder in his voice, terrifying and confounding the simple man who had spoken a simple truth. Poor fellow! in a few minutes he knew not what he had spoken: his senses were distraught, lost: he would scarcely to himself answer for his own consciousness, so much was he bewildered, flung about, made nothing of by that tremendous man, Mr. Montecute Crawley.

"Answer me, sir," thundered the indignant counsel; "were you never in gaol for felony? Answer, sir."

The man paused for a moment. He had never been in gaol for felony—Mr. Crawley knew that well enough—nevertheless the question was put with such vehement confidence, that, honest man as he was, the witness was for a time unable to answer. At length he ventured to reply that he never had been so imprisoned: which reply he again and again repeated, warned by the counsel—as by the trumpet of judgment—that he was upon his oath.

"And you 've never been caught poaching—come, I shall get something out of you? Speak up, sir! Upon your oath—have you never been caught setting wires for hares?" roared Mr. Crawley.

"Never, sir," stammered the witness. "Never caught in my life."

"Ha! you 've been lucky, then, my fine fellow," said the counsel. "You haven 't been caught, that 's what you mean, eh?" And at this humorous distinction, Mr. Montecute Crawley laughed—the prisoner, out of gratitude to his champion, laughed—all men in the court laughed, and the pretty ladies giggled. Assuredly there is no place in which the very smallest joke goes so far as in a court of justice. There, a farthing's worth of wit is often taken as though it were an ingot. And, accepted after such value, Mr. Montecute Crawley was a tremendous wit. "I believe, sir,"—he continued,—"come, sir, leave off twiddling your thumbs and look at me—I believe you 've been mixed up a little in smuggling? Come, you don't think there 's much harm in that? You know how to run a tub or two, I suppose?"

"No, I don't," answered the witness with new confidence.

"Bless me!" cried Mr. Crawley, "you 're a very innocent gentleman—very innocent, indeed." And then with much indignation at the unspotted character of the witness, he thundered, "Get down, sir!" Now, this seeming uncharitableness was, it may be hoped, very repulsive to the kindly nature of Mr. Crawley; but what he did, he did for the benefit of his client. To serve his client it was—he held the obligation as his forensic creed—it was his duty to paint every witness against him the blackest black, that the suffering, ill-used man at the bar might stand out in candid relief to the moral darkness frowning against 'im. Poor Mr. Crawley! In his heart of hearts, it was to him a great sorrow that—for the interest of his client—he was sometimes compelled to wear his gown, the solemn robe of the champion of truth, as the privileged garment, holding safe the coward and the bully. He was a gentleman—a most perfect gentleman—with an almost effeminate sense of honour when—his gown was off. But

when he robed himself, he knew that there might be dirty work to do, and if it must be done, why he did it as though he loved it.

All the witnesses for the prosecution, save one, had been examined; and the prisoner looked about him with blither looks: and there was an interchange of triumphant glances between himself and valued old cronies in court that plainly said, "All 's right;" when St. Giles was called. Then the prisoner bit his lip, and impatiently struck his fist upon the spikes in the front of the bar, and then with a hard smile—as at his folly, his absence of mind—wrapt his handkerchief about his bleeding hand. It was nothing—a mere moment of absurd forgetfulness. How could he be so ridiculous!

St. Giles was sworn. There was something strange and solemn in that miserable face; marked and lined as it was with a sad history. The man had been well-fed, well-lodged, though in a gaol. Imprisoned as a rogue and vagabond, he had nevertheless tasted of comforts that, until the crime of poverty and destitution was put upon him, he had not for many a season, known; and yet he looked harassed, weary, and wasted. Poor wretch! He had long wrestled with himself. He felt that he was cursed with knowledge of a secret forced upon him. It was another of the many unearned wrongs that blighted him. He hated himself that he had been brought to stand in that court an accuser of that man at the bar. He had fought against the feeling that had urged him to tell all; and then in the dead of night a voice would cry in his ear, "Murder—murder! remember, it is murder! base, bad, most unnatural murder!"—and so, as he thought, to lift a load from his heart, he demanded to be taken to the keeper of the gaol; and then—solemnly admonished by the prison chaplain—he narrated the terrible story that, in his hour of mad defiance, Robert Willis had told his fellow-prisoner. That confession made, St. Giles felt himself a wretch—a traitor to the man who had put the secret on him: he would have given worlds to recall the story told: it was impossible. He had told all. And in open court, he would be summoned to meet, eye to eye, the prisoner: would be made to rehearse a tale that should make that man, smiling so full of health and strength at the bar, a clod of earth. It was these thoughts that had cut themselves in the face of St. Giles: it was these thoughts that, like poison, struck a coldness at his heart; made him tremble, and look a most forlorn and guilty wretch, when called upon to tell his story.

He told all he knew. The prisoner at the bar had confessed to him that, stung by the unwillingness of his uncle to feed his means, he had killed the old man: at such an hour—with such an instrument. More: he had robbed him: and had hidden the

dead man's pocket-book somewhere near Pinckton's Corner. The prisoner had dropt a ring—it had always been too large for him—as he feared, upon the spot where the old man fell.

And then St. Giles was cross-examined: anatomised, torn to pieces by the counsel for the prisoner. A very few minutes, and so potent was the scorn, the indignation of Mr. Crawley, that St. Giles stood before the court the vilest of the vile of men; a human reptile, a moral blotch: a shame upon the race of Adam. The whole court looked upon him with wondering eyes—a monster of wickedness. And St. Giles felt the ignominy: it pierced him like a sword; yet with calm, unaltered looks he met the hatred of all around him.

And with the testimony of St. Giles closed the evidence for the prosecution. Twenty witnesses for the prisoner proved that it was impossible he could have been near Cow Meadow at the time of the murder; no: he was at a merry-making at the Lamb and Star. Again, every inch of Pinckton's Corner had been searched, and there was no pocket-book: another proof—if such indeed were needed—of the diabolic malice of St. Giles, who, it was plain, to cloak his own infamy with some small credit, hoped to destroy the prisoner. Mr. Montecute Crawley had been exceedingly moved by this tremendous evidence of the iniquity of man. Whilst cross-examining St. Giles, the counsel, touching upon what he termed the apocryphal pocket-book, had wept; yes, had suffered large round tears to "course down his innocent nose," to the lively concern of the court; and, more especially, to the emotion of many ladies, who wept in sympathy with that sweet man, that soft-hearted barrister.

The judge summed up the evidence; and the jury, after the pause of perhaps two minutes—their verdict was already smiling in their faces—through their ready foreman, Simon Blink, acquitted the prisoner. Robert Willis was—Not Guilty! What a shout rose from the court! It was in vain that the judge looked angrily around him: there was another huzza; another, and another. Friends and neighbours shook each other by the hand; and all blessed the admirable Mr. Crawley, the excellent judge, the upright and most manly jury. The hubbub suddenly ceased: and wherefore? Men were touched into respectful silence; and why? Oh, the scene was most impressive: for Mr. Justice Wattles—an old and most respectable magistrate—entered the dock; and there, in the face of the world, embraced his innocent kinsman—folded to his heart the pure, the spotless, the acquitted. And then Robert Willis left the gaol; and the multitude without shouted their sympathy and gratitude.

St. Giles remained within the prison. His term of captivity

was ended: yet, compassionating his misery, the governor would permit him to remain until night-fall, when he might depart unseen. Did he show himself in open day—such was the belief of the people of the gaol—the mob would tear him piecemeal. He had tried to hang an innocent man: would have shed the blood of the noblest creature in the county; and burning alive was a fate too good for him. And thus St. Giles was spurned and execrated. Shut up with felons, he was shunned by them as something monstrous; a demon, for whom they had no words save those of cursing and contempt. St. Giles, with a crushed heart, walked the court-yard. A few paces were tacitly allowed him by his fellow-prisoners; and he walked, in misery, apart from all. It was a beautiful summer's evening, and he paused, and with glassy, vacant eye, surveyed a swarm of insects dancing and whirling in that brief, bright world of theirs, a sunbeam in a gaol. "A gentleman wants to speak to you," said one of the turnkeys, looking contemptuously at the witness for the crown "Come this way." St. Giles obeyed the order, and entering the body of the prison, found there his former benefactor, young St. James.

"You are the man who gave evidence against the person tried to-day for murder?" said St. James.

"Yes, sir; and I spoke the truth: the very words the man said to me, I—"

"It is no matter. I did not send for you on that bad business. You and I have met before? How is it that I find you in this place?"

"I had no place to lay my head in, not a penny, only what your honour's goodness gave me, to buy a crumb; and so for that reason, after I 'd been hauled up, as they said, for killing a man that was afterwards found alive, they sent me here. But bless you, kind gentleman! for your goodness to me. I hav'n't been without doing wrong in my time, sir. I know that: but the world, sir, hasn't dealt kindly with me, nohow; it hasn't, indeed, sir."

"Where do you come from?" asked St. James.

"I come, sir, from"—and St. Giles stammered—"I come from abroad."

"And you are willing to earn honest bread? Is it so?" said his lordship.

"Oh, sir!" cried St. Giles, "if I might only have the chance! But it 's a hard case to put a man to—a hard case to deny a miserable cretur honest bread, and then if he don't starve without a word like a rat in a hole, to send him here to gaol. I say it, sir; I've had my sins—God pardon 'em—but I've been roughly treated, sir; roughly treated."

"I hope to think so," said St. James. "I may be wrong; but what I have seen of you to-day induces me to trust you. I want to know nothing of your history; nothing of the past. All I expect is an honest future. If you can promise this, you shall enter my service, and so stand upright again in the world."

"I do promise, sir—with all my heart and soul—with all"—but the poor fellow could speak no more; tears poured down his face; tears choked his speech.

"Here is money. Get yourself decent covering, and make your way to London. When there, present yourself at my house. Send this card to me, and I will see what may be done for you. Remember, I depend upon your good resolution, that I may not be laughed at for hiring a servant from a gaol." With these words, St. James quitted the prison, leaving St. Giles bewildered, lost in happiness. He glanced at the card, saw the name—the name of that noble, gracious boy, who had before preserved him—and the poor convict fell upon his knees, and with a grateful, bursting heart prayed for his protector.

Let us now for a brief space, shift the scene to the Lamb and Star. It was ten at night, and the house was crammed with revellers, all met to celebrate the triumph of injured innocence; to drink and drink to the attested purity of Robert Willis. What stories were told of his spirit, his address, his gallantry; how often, too, were curses called down upon the head of him who would have spilt such guiltless blood; how often did the drinkers wish they had St. Giles among them, that they might tear him to bits—yes, limb him for his infamy! And ere the night passed they had their wish; for St. Giles entered the Lamb and Star, and called with the confidence of a customer about him. But who was to know St. Giles in the neatly-dressed, trim-looking groom—the tall, clean-faced looking young fellow—that took his mug of ale from the hands of Becky, and nodded so smilingly at her? True it is, the girl stared; the blood rushed about her face, and darting from the room, she cried to herself, "It is—it is! the Lord preserve us;" but Becky looked with womanly eyes, and so remembered the ragged outcast in the spruce serving-man. In a few moments she returned to the room, and whilst she affected to give change to St. Giles, she said in a low, agitated voice—"I know you—they 'll know you, too, soon; and then they 'll have your life; go away: if you love—if you love yourself go away! What a man you are! What brings you here?"

"Just this little remembrance," said St. Giles, "for you got yourself into trouble for helping me: just this odd little matter; keep it for my sake, wench," and he placed a little silken huswife in her trembling hand.

"Law!" said Becky, "I didn't do nothing for you that I wouldn't ha' done for any body else; still I will keep this anyhow;" and Becky again blushing, again ran from the room. At the same moment there was a shout outside the house of "Master Willis—Master Willis!" and loud and long were the huzzas that followed. The door was flung open, and Willis, frantickly drunk, rushed in, followed by several of his companions who with him had celebrated the triumph of the day. Willis threw himself into a chair, and called for a "thousand bowls of punch"—and then he would have a song—and then he would have all the village girls roused up, and would dance the night through.

Great was the respect felt by the landlord of the Lamb and Star for Mr. Willis: nevertheless, the tumult rose to such a height, that Blink, with bending back, and in the very softest voice, begged of his honour not to insist upon a dance so late at night. Willis, with a death-pale face—his hair disordered—his eyes stupidly rolling—glared and hiccupped, and snapped his fingers at the nose of the landlord.

"Now squire, do be advised; do, indeed: you 'll hurt your health, squire, if you 've any more to night, I know you will," said Blink.

"You know!" shouted Willis—"Mughead! what do you know? Yes—ha! ha! ha!—you 're a pretty conjuror, you are. You know! Ha! you were the foreman of the jury, I believe? A pretty foreman—a precious jury! And you found me Not Guilty! Fool! nincompoop—ass! Here, I want to say something to you. Closer—a little closer." Blink approached still nearer to the drunken madman, when the ruffian spat in the landlord's face; he then roared a laugh, and shouted—"That for you! I killed the old fellow—I did it—damn me, I did it." And the wretch, trying to rise from his chair, fell prostrate to the ground; whilst all in the room shrunk with horror from the self-denounced homicide.

CHAPTER XVI.

Every guest of the Lamb and Star bore away the confession of the assassin; and full soon scornful, loathing looks beset the path of Robert Willis. The gossipping villagers would stand silent, eyeing him askaunce, as he passed them. The dullest hind would return his nod and good-morrow with a sullen, awkward air. Even little children cowered from him, huddling about their mothers, as the gay homicide would pat their heads, and give them pennies.

It did not serve, that Robert Willis with a roaring laugh declared the whole a jest—a drunken frolic just to make folks stare. It served not that he would loudly and laboriously chuckle "to think how he had made Blink shake—and how, with just a word or so, he had taken everybody in." No; the confession of the murderer had sunk into the hearts of his hearers; the tale spread far and wide, and not even butts of ale—and Willis tried that Lethe—would drown the memory of it. And so in brief time, the miserable wretch was left alone with the fiends. A few, out of pure love of the liquor he bestowed, would still have doubted the blood-guiltiness of their patron; but even they could not long confront the reproaches of their fellows. And so, with a late and hesitating virtue, they wiped their lips of the murderer's malt, and consented to believe him very bad indeed. Willis, as one by one drop from him, grew fiercely confident; battling with brazen brow the looks of all. Unequal fight! The devil is a coward in the end: and so, after a show of scornful opposition, the poor cowed fiend gave up the contest and Robert Willis went no man knew whither. A sad blow was this to Justice Wattles. That he should have spent so much money on so hopeless a creature! That he should have gone to the heavy expense of Mr. Montecute Crawley! That at so vast a price he should have saved his kinsman from the gibbet,—when the desperate fool had hung himself in the opinion of all men! It would have been better, far cheaper, to let truth take its course,—but then there was the respectability of the family! And yet, it was some poor consolation to the puzzled justice, that however a Willis might have deserved the gallows, he had escaped it: opinion was a hard thing; but at the hardest it was not tightened hemp. Nobody could say that a Willis was ever hanged. Truth, after all, had not been sacrificed for nothing; and that was some comfort.

In due course, the Kent waggon brought St. Giles to London. It was about five o'clock on a bright summer morning when St. Giles, with rapturous eyes looked upon the Borough. Yes, he had returned to his hard-nursing mother, London. She had taught him to pick and steal, and lie, and when yet a child, to anticipate iniquities of men; and then—foolish, guilty mother!—she had scourged her youngling for his naughtiness; believing by the severity of her chastisement best to show her scorn of vice, her love of goodness. And St. Giles, as the waggon crawled along, lay full length upon the straw, and mused upon the frequent haunts of his early days.

Sweet and balmy sweet such thoughts! Refreshing to the soul, jaded and fretful from the fight of men, to slake its thirst for peace and beauty, at the fountain of memory, when childhood

seemed to have played with angels! What a luxury of the heart, to cast off the present like a foul, begrimed garment, and let the soul walk awhile in the naked innocence of the past! Here is the scene of a happy childhood. It is full of gracious shapes—a resurrection of the gentle, beautiful! We have lain in that field, and thought the lark—a trembling, fluttering speck of song above us—must be very near to God. That field is filled with sweetest memories, as with flowers. And there is an old—old tree. How often have we climbed it, and, throned amid its boughs, have read a wondrous book; a something beating like a drum at our heart: a something that confusing us with a dim sense of glory, has filled our soul with a strange, fitful music, as with the sounds of a far-coming triumph! Such may be the memories of a happy youth! And what, as St. Giles, with his face leaning on his propped hands, gazed from the waggon, what, seeing the scenes of his childhood—what saw he? Many things big with many thoughts.

Yes; how well he knew that court! Six-and-thirty hours' hunger had raged in his vitals, and with a desperate plunge, he had dived into a pocket. It was empty. But the would-be thief had been felt, and was hotly pursued. He turned up that court. He was very young, then; and, like a fool, knew not the ins-and-outs of the Borough. He ran up the court; there was no outlet; and the young thief was caught like a stoat in a trap. And now St. Giles sees the joy of his pursuer; and almost feels the blow the good, indignant man, dealt as with a flail upon the half-naked child. Ay, and it was at that post, that his foot slipt when he was chased by the beadle for stealing two potatoes from a dealer's sack.—Yes and opposite that very house, the beadle laid about him with his cane; and there it was that the big, raw-boned, painted woman, tore him from the beadle's grasp; and giving him a penny, told him with an oath to run for very life. Such were the memories—yes, every turning had such—that thronged upon St. Giles, gazing in thought upon his childhood days, from the Kent waggon.

And then happier thoughts possessed our hero. He looked again and again at the card given him by St. James; and that bit of paper with its few words was a talisman to his soul; a written spell that threw a beauty and a brightness about the meanest things of London. Human life moved about him full of hope and dignity. He had—or would have—an interest in the great game—how great and how small!—of men. He would no longer be a man-wolf; a wretched thing to hunt and be hunted. He would know the daily sweets of honest bread, and sleep the sleep of peace. What a promotion in the scale of life! What unhoped felicity, to be permitted to be honest, gentle! What a saving

mercy, to be allowed to walk upright with those he might begin to look upon as fellow-creatures! And as St. Giles thought of this, he could have fallen upon his knees on London stones, in thankfulness and penitence. Solitude to him had been a softening teacher. Meditation had come upon him in the far wilds: and the isolated, badged, and toiling felon for the first time thought of the mystery of himself; for the first time dared to look in upon his heart—a look that some who pass for bold men sometimes care not to take—and he resolved to fight against what seemed his fate. He would get back to the world. Despite of the sentence that bade him not to hope, he would hope. Though doomed to be a life-long human instrument, a drudging carcase, he would win back his manhood—he would return to life a self-respecting being. And this possessing will beat, constant as a pulse, within him. And these feelings, though the untutored man could give them no harmonious utterance, still sustained and soothed him, and now, in London streets, made most hopeful music to his soul.

And St. Giles passed through old familiar places, and would not ponder on the miserable memories that thronged them. No; with a strong will, he laid the rising ghosts of his boyish days, and went with growing stoutness on. He was bound for St. James's-square, and the way before him was a path of pleasure. How changed was London-bridge! To his boyhood it had been a mass of smoked, grimed stone: and now it seemed a shape of grace and beauty. He looked, too, at the thousand ships that, wherever the sea rolled, with mute gigantic power told the strength, the wealth, and enterprise of England. He looked, and would not think of the convict craft, laden with crimes, and wrong, and blasphemy, that had borne him to his doom. He passed along, through Lombard-street to the Bank; and he paused and smiled as he thought of the time when the place seemed to him a place of awful splendour; a visible heaven, and they he thought who went for moneys there, "angels ascending and descending." And above all, what a glory it would be for him—a fame surpassing all burglarious renown—to rob that Bank of England. And then he saw the Mansion-house; and thought of the severe and solemn Alderman who had sentenced him to Bridewell. And then St. Giles passed along Cheapside, and stood before St. Paul's church; and then for the first time felt somewhat of its tremendous beauty. It had been to him a mere mountain of stone, with a clock upon it: and now, he felt himself subdued, refined, as the Cathedral, like some strange harmony, sank into his soul. He thought, too, of Christ and the fishermen and tent-makers Christ had glorified—for he had learned to read of them when a felon in the wilderness,—and his heart glowed with Christian fervour at Christ's temple,—that

visible glory made and dedicated to the pur oses of the Great Teacher—most mighty in his gentleness, most triumphant by his endurance, most adorable by the arity that he taught to men, as the immortal link to hold them still to God! Could expression have breathed upon the thoughts of St. Giles, thus he might have delivered himself. He spoke not: but stood gazing at the church, and thinking what a blessing it was upon a land, wherein temples for such purposes abounded; where solemn men set themselves apart from the sordid ways of life, keeping their minds calm and undefiled from the chink and touch of money, to heed of nothing but the fainting, bleeding, erring hearts of those who had dwelt upon the earth as though the earth had never a grave. Yes; it was a blessing to breathe in such a land. It was a destiny demanding a daily prayer of thankfulness, to know that Christian charity was preached from a thousand and a thousand pulpits; to feel that the spirits of the Apostles, their earnest, truthful spirits, (ere solemnised by inspiration), still animated bishops, deans, and rectors; and even cast a glory on the worn coats of how many thousand curates! St. Giles, the returned transport, the ignorant and sinning man; St. Giles, whose innocence of childhood had been offered to the Moloch selfishness of society, even St. Giles felt all this; and with swelling heart and the tears in his throat, passed down Ludgate-Hill with a fervent devotion, thanking his God who had brought him from the land of cannibals to the land of Christians.

And now is St. Giles aroused by a stream of people passing upward and downward, and as though led by one purpose turning into the Old Bailey. "What 's this crowd about?" he asked of one, and ere he was answered, he saw far down at Newgate door a scaffold and a beam; and a mass of human creatures, crowded like bees, gazing upon them.—"What 's this?" again asked St. Giles, and he felt the sickness of death upon him.

"What 's this!" cried a fellow with a sneering leer,—"Why, where do you come from to ask that? Why it 's king George's new drop, and this is the first day he 's going to try it. No more hanging at Tyburn now; no more drinks of ale at the Pound. It 's all now to be the matter of a minute, they say. But it will never answer—it never does; none of these new-fangled things. Nothing like the old horse and cart, take my word for it. Besides, all London could see something of the show when they went to Tyburn, while next to nobody can be 'commodated in the Old Bailey. But it serves me right. If I hadn't got so precious drunk last night, I 'd been up in time to have got a place near the gallows. Silence! There goes eight o'clock."

And as the hour was struck by the bells of Christian churches—

of churches built in Christ's name, who conquered vengeance by charity—men were led forth to be strangled by men, their last moments soothed and made hopeful by Christ's clergyman.

There was a sudden hush among the crowd; and St. Giles felt himself rooted where he stood; with gaping mouth, and eyes glaring towards Newgate. The criminals, trussed for the grave, came out. "One—two—three—four—five—six—seven,"—cried St. Giles in a rising scream, numbering the wretches as each passed to his place—"eight—nine—ten—good God! how many?"—and terror-stricken, he could count no further.

And then the last night's bacchanal next St. Giles, took up the reckoning, counting as he would have counted so many logs of wood, so many sacks of coals.—"Eight—nine—ten—eleven—twelve—thirteen—fourteen—fifteen. That's all; yes, it was to be fifteen: that little chap's the last. Fifteen."

Reader, pause a moment. Drop not the book with sudden indignation at the writer who, to make the ingredients of his story "thick and slab," invents this horror. No; he but copies from the chronicles of the Old Bailey. Turn to them, incredulous reader, and you will find that on the balmy morning of the twenty-third of June, in the year of our Offended Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty four, fifteen human beings were hanged in front of Newgate: death-offerings to the laws and virtues of merry England. It was the first day, too, of the new drop; and the novel engine must be graced with a gallant number. Fame has her laurels; why should not Justice have her ropes? There was, too, a pleasantry—the devil must joke after some such fashion—in trying the substance and capacity of a new gallows, by so much weight of human flesh convulsed in the death-struggle. And so—great was the legislative wit!—there were fifteen to be strangled. A great example this to an erring, law-breaking world of—the strength of timber!

The Lords of the Privy Council had met, with good king George the Third at their head, to correct the vices of the land. There was death for the burglar—death for the footpad—death for the sheep-stealer—death, death, death for a hundred different sinners. The hangman was the one social physician, and was thought to cure all peccant ills. Horrible, ghastly quack! And yet the king's majesty believed in the hideous mountebank, and every week, by the advice of his Lords of the Council—the wise men of St. James's, the Magi of the kingdom, the starred and gartered philosophers and philanthropists—every week did sacred royalty call in Jack Ketch to cure his soul-sick children! Yea; it was with the hangman's fingers, that the father of his people touched the People's Evil. And if in sooth the malady was not allayed,

it was for no lack of paternal tending, since we find in the Old Bailey Register—that thing of blood, and bigotry, and ignorance, —that, in one little year, in almost the first twelvemonth of the new drop, the hangman was sent to ninety-six wretches, who were publicly cured of their ills in the front of Newgate! And the King in Council thought there was no such remedy for crime as the grave; and therefore, by the counsel of his privy sages failed not to prescribe death-warrants. To reform man was a tedious and uncertain labour: now hanging was the sure work of a minute.

Oh, that the ghosts of all the martyrs of the Old Bailey—and, though our profession of faith may make some moral antiquarians stare, it is our invincible belief that the Newgate Calendar has its black array of martyrs; victims to ignorance, perverseness, prejudice; creatures doomed by the bigotry of the Council table; by the old haunting love of blood as the best cure for worst of ills:—Oh, that the faces of all of these could look from Newgate walls! That but for a moment the men who stickle for the laws of death, as for some sweet household privilege, might behold the grim mistake; the awful sacrilegious blunder of the past; and, seeing, make amendment for the future.

A few minutes, and fifteen human creatures, sanctified with immortal souls, were carcases. The wisdom of the king and lords in council was made manifest to the world by fifteen scarecrows to guilt, pendent, and swaying to and fro. A few minutes, and the heart of London, ay of the Old Bailey, beat equably as before. The criminals were hanged, cut down, and the mob separated only to meet—if it should again please the wisdom of the king in council—for a like show on the next Monday; Saint Monday being, in the good old hempen times, the hangman's special saint's day.

The sufferers were scarcely dead, when St. Giles staggered like a drunken man from the crowd. He made his way down Ludgate-hill, and sick and reeling, proceeded up Fleet-street. He saw, he felt that the people stared at him; and the thought that he was an escaped felon—that if detected he would as surely rehearse the bloody scene, as surely as those fifteen corses scarce done struggling—seemed to wither him. He stumbled against a post; then, for a moment gathering energy for the effort, he turned up Shoe-lane, and entered a public-house. "A mug of water, master;" he asked of the landlord.

"It's a liquor we don't sell," said the host, "and I can't afford to give it away. Water! I should think a dram of brandy would be better for your complaint. Why, you look like a blue-bag

Got no catching sickness I hope? If so, be so good as to go to another house. I 've never yet had a day's illness, and I don't intend to have."

"Nothing but a little faint, master. I passed, just now, by the Old Bailey, and—and it 's been too much for me."

"Well, you must have a coddled sort of heart, you must. I should have gone myself, only I couldn't leave the bar; for they don't hang fifteen every day, and—why, if now you aint as white as if you 'd run from the gallows yourself."

"Water, master—water," cried St. Giles,—"and for the brandy, I 'll take that afterwards."

"Better take it first," said the landlord, "but that 's your business. Well, I shouldn't much like such customers as you," he added, as St. Giles hastily quaffed the lymph. "Now, do take some of the real stuff; or, with that cold rubbish, you 'll give yourself the aygur;" and the host pressed the brandy.

"In a minute; I 'll just sit down a bit," said St. Giles, and taking the brandy, he entered a side-room. It was empty. Seating himself, with the untasted liquor before him, he again saw the vision that had appalled and rooted him in the Old Bailey. He could swear to it—it was clear to his eye as his own hand. All but himself had beheld fifteen felons on the drop, but he had seen sixteen; and the last, the sixteenth, was himself; yes, if in a glass he had ever seen himself. True; it was but a vision—but a vision that foreshadowed a horrid truth. He had escaped from captivity to be hanged for the crime. All the bright promises of the morning had vanished, and, in the bitterness of his thoughts, he already sat in the gloom of Newgate. Thus sunk in misery, he was unconscious of the entrance of a visitor, who, in a few moments, startled him with a greeting.

"Been to the Jug, mate? A cruel fine day to be hanged on, isn't it?" asked the new-comer.

St. Giles looked at the speaker, who suddenly recoiled from his glance, as from the glare of some wild beast. "Why, what 's the matter?" asked the man. "Do you think you 'll know me again, that you stare in that way? Perhaps, you do know me?"

"Not at all, friend; not at all; though coming suddenly, you startled me a little at first." But instantly, St. Giles recognised his old master and tempter, Tom Blast. Vice had cut still deeper lines in his wicked face; time had crowned him with its most horrid crown, grey hairs upon a guilty head; time sat heavily upon his back, yet St. Giles knew his early tutor; knew the villain who had snared his boyhood, making him a doomed slave for his natural life. Fierce thoughts rose in the heart of St. Giles,

as he gazed upon the traitor who had sold him; a moment, and he could have dipped his hands in that old man's blood: another, instant, and he looked upon him with compassion, with deepest pity. The villain saw the change, and took new confidence.

"It 's lucky-times for you, mate, if you can tipple brandy. If I 've had nothing but five-farden beer since Tuesday, may I be pisoned!"

"You may have this for me," said St. Giles, and he gave Blast the brandy, which the old knave greedily swallowed.

"Should like to meet with one o' your sort every day," cried Blast, smacking his lips. "Never saw your like afore."

"Indeed?" asked St. Giles, who, from the tone and manner of Blast, felt himself secure from discovery. "Indeed?"

"No, never. You couldn't tell me where I could see you to-morrow?" asked Blast.

"Why, where may you be found—where do you live?" questioned St. Giles quickly.

"Oh, I live at Horsleydown; but I so like the look o' you, mate, I 'll meet you here," answered Blast. "I 'm agreeable to anything."

"Very well," said St. Giles, "say twelve o'clock; we 'll have another glass. Stay, you can have another now; here 's sixpence for the treat. I must go; good bye;" and St. Giles was hurrying away, when Blast seized him by the hand, and whilst our hero shrunk and shook at his touch, swore that he was a good fellow, and a regular king. St. Giles, releasing himself, retreated quickly from the house, casting frequent looks behind that he might not be followed by his former friend, whom, it was his hope, despite of the engagement of the morrow, never to behold again. Nevertheless, St. Giles had yearned to have some further speech with Blast. Half-a-dozen times the words were at his lips, and then the fear of the chance of detection kept him dumb. And then again he repented that he had not risked the peril, that he might at once have known the fate of his mother. He had heard no word of her. Was she dead? Remembering what was her life, he almost hoped so. Yet she was the only creature of his blood: and, if still living, it would be to him some solace—something to link him anew to her—to snatch her old age from the horrors that defiled it. With these thoughts, St. Giles took his way up the Strand, and feeling a strange pleasure in the daring, was soon in Bow-street. He approached the office: the judgment-seat where he was arraigned for his maiden theft. There at the door, playing with his watch-chain—with almost the same face, the same cut clothes, the same flower in his mouth, of fifteen years before—stood Jerry Whistle, officer, and prime thief-taker. A sort

of human blood-hound, as it seemed expressly fashioned by madam nature, to watch and seize on evil-doers. He appeared to be sent into this world with a peculiar nose for robbers; scenting them through all their doublings, although they should put seas between him and them. And Jerry performed his functions with such extreme good-humour, seized upon a culprit with such great good-nature, that it seemed impossible that death should end a ceremony so cordially began. Jerry Whistle would take a man to Newgate as to a tavern; a place wherein human nature might with the fattest and the strongest enjoy itself.

As St. Giles approached Whistle, he thought that worthy officer, learned as he was in human countenances, eyed him with a look of remembrance; whereupon, with a wise boldness, St. Giles stepped up to him, and asked the way to Seven Dials. "Straight ahead, my tulip, and ask again," said Jerry; and he continued to suck his pink and chink his watch chain.

In a few minutes, St. Giles was in Short's Gardens. He looked upwards at the third floor; where his first friend, Mrs. Aniseed, had carried him to her gentle-hearted lord, Bright Jem. No: they were tenants there no longer. The windows, always bright, were crusted with dust; two were broken, and patched with paper. And there was no flower-pot, with its three-pennyworth of nature from Covent-garden; no singing-bird. St. Giles, with a sinking of the heart, passed on. It was plain he had lost a part of something that, in his hours of exile, had made England so fair a land of promise to him. He turned his steps towards Seven Dials. He would look up at the shop of the muffin-maker: of course he could not make himself known—at least not yet—to that sweet-and-bitter philanthropist, Capstick: but it would be something to see how time had dealt with him. A short space, and St. Giles approached the door; the very threshold he had crossed with basket and bell. Capstick had departed; no muffin graced the window. The shop was tenanted by a small undertaker; a tradesman who had to higgle with the poor for his price of laying that eye-sore, poverty, in the arms of the maternal earth who, least partial of all mothers, treats her offspring all alike. "Can he be dead?" thought St. Giles, for the moment unconsciously associating his benefactor with the emblems of mortality: as though death had come there and edged the muffin-maker out. Ere he could think another thought, St. Giles stood in the shop. The master, whistling a jig of the time, was at his work, driving tin tacks into a baby's coffin. The pawnbroker would have another gown—a blanket, it might be—for those tin tacks; but that was nothing: why should wealth claim all the pride of the world, even where pride is said to leave us—at the grave?

"Do you know whether Mr. Capstick 's alive?" asked St. Giles of the whistling workman.

"Can't say, I'm sure," answered the undertaker. "I only know I've not yet had the luck of burying him."

"I mean the muffin-maker, who lived here before you," said St. Giles; "you knew him?"

"I've heard of him, but never seen him—never want. He was a tailor as was ruined last here. I say,"—cried the undertaker, with an intended joke in his eye—"I say, you don't want anything in my way?"

St. Giles, making no answer, stept into the street. He then paused. Should he go forward? He should have no luck that day, and he would seek no further. And while he so determined, he moved towards his native nook—the fetid, filthy corner, in which he first smelt what was called the air. He walked towards Hog Lane.

Again and again did he pass it. Again and again did he approach St. Giles's Church, and gaze upon the clock. It was only ten; too early—he was sure of that—to present himself in St. James's-square. Otherwise he would first go there, and return to the Lane under cover of the night. He then crossed the way, and looked up the Lane. He saw not a face he knew. All he had left were dead; and new tenants, other wretches, fighting against want, and gin, and typhus, were preparing new loam for the churchyard. No: he would not seek now. He would come in the evening—it would be the best time, the very best.

With this feeling, St. Giles turned away, and was proceeding slowly onward, when he paused at a shop-window. In a moment, he felt a twitch at his pocket, and turning, he saw a child of some eight or ten years old, carrying away a silk handkerchief that Becky, in exchange for the huswife, had forced upon him. How sudden, and how great was St. Giles's indignation at the villain thief! Never had St. Giles felt so strongly virtuous! The pigmy felon flew towards Hog Lane; and in a moment, St. Giles followed him and stood at the threshold of the house wherein the thief had taken shelter. St. Giles was about to enter, when he was suddenly stopt by a man—that man was Tom Blast.

"Well, if this isn't luck!" said Blast spreading himself in the door-way, to secure the retreat of the thief. "Who 'd ha' thought we should ha' met so soon?"

"All 's one for that," said St. Giles. "I've been robbed, and the young thief 's here, and you know it."

"A thief here! Mind what you 're about, young man: do mind what you say, afore you take away the character of a honest house. We 've nothin' here but our good name to live upon, and

so do mind what you 're about." And Blast uttered this with such mock earnestness, looked so knowingly in the face of St. Giles, that, unconsciously, he shrank from the speaker; who continued: "Is it likely now, that you could think anybody in this Lane would pick a gentleman's pocket? Bless your heart! we 're all so honest here, we are," and Blast laughed.

"I thought you told me," said St. Giles, confused, "that you lived somewhere away at Horsleydown."

"Lor love you! folks as are poor like us have, you know, a dozen town-houses; besides country ones under hedges and hay-stacks. We can easily move about: we haven't much to stop us. And now, to business. You 've really lost your handkercher?"

"'Tisn't that I care about it," said St. Giles, "only you see 'twas given me by somebody."

"Given! To be sure. Folks do give away things, don't they? All the world 's gone mad, I think; people do so give away." St. Giles's heart fell at the laughing, malignant look with which Blast gazed upon him. It was plain that he was once again in the hands of his master; again in the power of the devil that had first sold him. "Howsomever," continued Blast, "if you 've really been robbed, and the thief 's in this house, shall I go and fetch a officer? You don't think, sir, do you"—and Blast grinned and bowed his head—"you don't think, sir, as how I 'd pertect anybody as had broke the laws of my native land? Is it likely? Only say the word. Shall I go for a officer?"

"No; never mind—it doesn't matter. Still, I 've a fancy for that handkercher, and will give more than it 's worth for it."

"Well, that 's like a nobleman, that is. Here, Jingo!"—cried Blast, stepping a pace or two into the passage, and bawling his lustiest—"Jingo, here 's the gen'lman as has lost the handkercher you found; bring it down, my beauty." Obedient to the command, a half-naked child—with the very look and manner of St. Giles's former self—instantly appeared, with the stolen goods in his hand. "He 's sich a lucky little chap, this is,"—said Blast—"nothin's lost hereabout, that he doesn't find it. Give the fogle to the gen'lman; and who knows? perhaps, he 'll give you a guinea for it." The boy obeyed the order, and stood with open hand for the reward. St. Giles was about to bestow a shilling, when Tom Blast sidled towards him, and in an affected tone of confidence, said,—"Couldn't think o' letting you do sich a thing."

"And why not?" asked St. Giles, becoming more and more terrified at the bold familiarity of the ruffian. "Why not?"

"'Tisn't right; not at all proper; not at all what I call natral"—and here Blast whispered in St. Giles's ear—"that money should pass atween brothers."

"Brothers!" cried St. Giles.

"Ha, sir!" said Blast, taking his former manner,—"you don't know what a woman that Mrs. St. Giles was! She was a good soul, wasn't she? You must know that her little boy fell in trouble about a pony; and then he was in Newgate, being made all right for Tyburn, jist as this little feller was born. And then they took and transported young St. Giles; and he never seed his mother—never know'd nothin' that she'd got a little baby."

"And she 's dead!" cried St. Giles.

"And, this I will say," answered Blast, "comfortably buried. She was a good soul—too good for this world. You didn't know St. Giles, did you?" said Blast with a laugh.

"Why do you ask?" replied the trembling transport.

"Because if you did, you must see the likeness. Come here, Jingo," and Blast laid one hand upon the urchin's head, and with the other pointed out his many traits of resemblance. "There 's the same eye for a fogle—the same nose—the same everything. And oh, isn't he fond o' ponies, neither! jist like his poor dear brother as is far away in Botany Bay. Don't you see that he's the very spit on him?" cried Blast.

"I can't say—how should I know?" answered St. Giles, about to hurry off; and then he felt a strange interest in the victim, and paused and asked—"Who takes care of him, now his mother 's gone?"

"He hasn't a friend in the world but me," said Blast.

"God help him!" thought St. Giles.

"And I—though you'd never think it"—continued Blast, "I love the little varmint, jist as much as if I was his own father."

CHAPTER XVII.

With many words did Tom Blast strive to assure St Giles that the orphan boy had found a watchful parent in his mother's friend; and St. Giles was fain to look believingly. He saw his own doomed childhood in the miserable, mistaught creature: he saw the wretch prepared to sell him, in due season, to Newgate shambles; and yet the passion, the agony that tugged at the transport's heart must be subdued: he must mask his hate with a calm look, must utter friendly words. "'Twas kind of you, mate,—very kind," said St. Giles, "to take such care of the young cretur. Well, good day;" and St. Giles coloured and

stammered as he felt the eye of Blast was upon him—"we shall meet again."

"You never said a truer word," cried Blast, and he held forth his hand. St. Giles breathed heavily; he would rather have grasped a wolf by the throat; and then he took the hand that had all but fitted the halter to his neck. "We shall meet agin," said Blast; and the words, like bodiless furies, seemed to St. Giles to fill the air around him. He passed from the lane into the open street, and still they followed him; each syllable seemed a devil threatening him. "We shall meet again," rang in his ears, torturing his brain; and again he saw the ghastly horror of the morning; again beheld those fifteen cornel wretches; again beheld the shadow of himself. He passed on, crossed the road; the street was thronged; the hubbub of the day was at its height; yet St. Giles saw nothing but those pinioned men, and the preacher of Christ's word, in the name of his merciful Master, solacing sinners to be in a moment strangled by the warrant of a Christian king. He paused, and with his hand before his eyes, leaned against a wall; and piercing words in terrible distinctness fell upon him,—"I am the resurrection and the life." He started, and a few paces from him, in St. Giles's churchyard, he beheld the parish priest. The holy man was reading the burial service over pauper clay; was sanctifying ashes to ashes, dust to dust, amid the whirl of life—the struggle and the roar of money-clawing London.

The ceremony went on, the solemn sentences tuned with the music of eternal hopes, fitfully heard through cries of "Chairs to mend," and "Live mackarel." The awful voice of Death seemed scoffed, derided, by the reckless bully, Life. The prayer that embalmed poor human dust for the judgment, seemed as measured gibberish that could never have a meaning for those who hurried to and fro, as though immortality dwelt in their sinews. And that staid and serious-looking man, with upturned eyes and sonorous voice, clad in a robe of white, and holding an opened book,—why, what was he? Surely, he was playing some strange part in a piece of business in which business men could have no interest. The ceremony is not concluded, and now comes an adventurous trader with a dromedary and a monkey on its back, the well-taught pug, with dolled feathered cap, sagaciously soliciting half-pence. And there, opposite the churchyard, the prayer of the priest coming brokenly to his ears, is a tradesman smiling at his counter, ringing the coin, and scarcely snuffing the Golgotha at his door, asking what article he shall next have the happiness to show? And thus in London highways do Death and Life shoulder each other. And Life heeds not the foul, impertinent warning;

but at the worst thinks Death, when so very near, a nuisance. It is made by familiarity a nasty, vulgar, unhealthy thing; it is too close a neighbour to become a solemnity.

It has been held to be a wise, deep-thoughted ordinance of the Egyptians that at their banquets was served a skeleton, that, in its grim nakedness, it might preach their coming nakedness to all the revellers: that it might show their future outline of bone, when called to lay aside the fleshly garment, laced and interlaced with so divine a mystery of nerves that, subtle as light, conveys the bliss of being. And so was a skull made a moralist; and solemn were the mute exhortations falling from its grinning jaws; profound its comic teaching. For, apart from association, the expression of a bare skull has, to ourselves at least, little in it serious: nay, there has always seemed to us a quaint cheerfulness in it. The cheek-bones look still puckered with a smile, as though contracted when it flung aside the mask of life, and caught a glimpse of the on-coming glory.

And the Egyptians are lauded for their dinner skeleton. Indeed, at the first thought, it seems a notable way of teaching sobriety and good manners. Yet, could we come at the truth—could we know the very heart of the banquet, throbbing after an hour or so with hot wine, we should know, past dispute, how grievously the great Preacher Bone had failed in his purpose. We should hear of quick-witted Egyptians making unseemly jokes at his gaunt nakedness; we should see one reprobate idolater of leeks capping death's-head with an empty bowl, even as a boy ventures a joke upon his sleeping schoolmaster. We should see another—a fine young Theban—spirting wine in the cavernous eyeholes of Death, bidding him look double for the libation. But of these jests we hear nothing; we only hear of the wisdom of the whereabout of the skeleton, and nothing of the affronts that—we would almost swear to the fact—its familiarity with the living drew upon it.

And therefore—oh, legislators!—remove city churchyards from the shop-doors of citizens. Your goodly purpose has altogether failed. By huddling the dead with the living, it was doubtless your benign intention to place a lesson continually in the eyes of trading men—to show them how vain and fleeting was even a cent. per cent. profit—to prove that, however thumping the balance on the books, Death, with his dirty, grave-yard fingers, might any minute come and wipe it out. The thing has not prospered. How many hackney-coach stands have with the best intention been established near churchyards! For hours and hours the drivers sit and sit, with one eye upon the grave, and another on the pavement. And yet these men, so open to daily meditation—so

appealed to by tomb-stone eloquence—these men are scarcely to be trusted with unweighed bullion. We speak within measure when we say that not above a hundred times have we heard of a hackney-coachman returning sovereigns which—in a moment of vinous enthusiasm—had been unguardedly tendered for shillings. No: we could swear it. Not above a hundred times.

And still St. Giles stood, listening to the burial service, when he felt something pulling at his coat-skirt. He looked round, and saw his half-brother, the precocious Jingo, lauded by Tom Blast, at his side. "I say," cried the urchin, with a wink, and pointing towards a spot in the churchyard, "that 's where we put the old 'oman."

"What,—mother? Where?" cried St. Giles.

Jingo picked up a piece of broken tobacco-pipe from the pavement. "Bet you a pound," said the boy, "I 'll hit the place. Why, jist there;" and unerringly he pitched the fragment on a distant grave. This done, Jingo nodded in self-approval.

Without a word, St. Giles entered the churchyard, and approached the grave; Jingo running like a dog at his side. "Poor soul! poor soul!" cried St. Giles; and then, looking earnestly down upon the clay, he added, "after all, it 's a better place than the Lane—a better place."

"Bless your 'art," said the boy, "that 's what mother said afore she come here. She called me to her, and said she was a-goin' to be 'appy at last—and then there was a man as read to her two or three times out of a book, and would read for all Tom Blast said he 'd get him pumped on for coming to the Lane—well, when she talked o' being 'appy, the man said she was a wicked cretur to think o' sich a thing. And then didn't the old 'oman wring her hands, and call Tom Blast sich names—and didn't she hug me like nothin', and scream out, and ask who 'd take care o' me?"

"I 'll take care of you," cried St. Giles, and he placed an arm about the boy's neck. "Be a good child, and I 'll take care of you: I promise it—here I promise it; here, where poor mother lies. And you will be a good boy, won't you?" asked St. Giles affectionately, and tears came into his eyes.

"Oh, won't I though!" cried Jingo, plainly expecting some reward for his ready promise.

"I know you will—I 'm sure you will," said St. Giles, patting the boy's head; "and now go home, and you and I 'll meet again afore long. Here 's a shilling for you; and mind you take no more handkerchers." Jingo seized the money—ducked his head up and down—and in a moment disappeared in Hog Lane. "I 'll save him from that devil,—as God 's in heaven I will," cried St. Giles;

and as though nerved with a good purpose, he walked sharply on. He had suddenly found in life a new responsibility, and with it new determination. With this thought he pursued his rapid way towards the mansion of St. James. With trembling hand he struck the knocker: again and again, harder and harder. Still the door remained closed: and then, to the fancy of St. Giles, the lion's head looked sneeringly at him, mocking his errand. "There's nobody at home," said St. Giles despondingly, and at the same moment the door was opened by a footboy, a most bright mulatto of about fifteen. There was an ease, a self-assurance in the youth, that proved him to have been born for the brilliant livery that adorned him. He seemed to have come into the world, like a parroquet, to disport in gaudy covering. And thus, a very nestling, he had been fledged with the St. James's livery; for when scarcely six years old, he had been presented as a sort of doll footboy to one of the Marquess's daughters: like her pet pug, he was such a curious little wretch—such a pretty little monster. His colour was so bright—his nose so flat—his eyes so sharp—and he had this advantage of the pug, his hair was so woolly. Had he been made of the best Nankin china—and not compounded of Saxon and negro blood—he had scarcely been more precious. Still, human toy as he was, he had this drawback from his humanity: Ralph—such was his name—grew out of the curious; he shot up from the squab Indian image into the lanky, loose-jointed youth. Could he have remained all his life under four feet, he would have continued a treasure; but he grew, and growing, was lowered from the eminence of his childhood to the flat walk of the servants'-hall. It was so pretty to see him—like an elfin dwarf from some Indian mine—tripping with prayer-book at his young lady's heels: but nature, with her old vulgarity, would have her way, and so, Ralph, the son of Cesar Gum, who was duly married to Kitty Muggs, who in good time duly buried her African lord,—Ralph, we say, was fast spindling into the mere footman. And he had ever had a quick sense of the rights of livery. It was a garb that, placing him in near and dear communication with the noble, by consequence elevated him to a height, not measurable by any moral barometer, above common people. He looked from under his gold-laced hat, as from a ladder, down upon the vulgar. His mother, the widowed Gum, would in her mild, maternal way remonstrate with her beloved child, on his unchristian pride; and when in turn rebuked, as she never failed to be, with exorbitant interest, she would comfort herself by declaring, "that it was just so with his blessed father, who was gone to a better place. He, too, had such a spirit." Little thought St. Giles, as he stood confronted with that young mulatto

—at the time with all his thoughts half-buried in a pottle, from which he fished up strawberry after strawberry, conveying the fruit with a judicial smack to his mouth,—little thought St. Giles that he stood before the only child of the negro Cæsar who, in Covent Garden watch-house, had borne witness against him. As yet St. Giles had ventured no syllable of inquiry, when young Ralph, in his own masterly manner, began the dialogue.

"I say, if it isn't an uncivil thing to put to a gentleman,—how much might you have give the Marquess for this house? You couldn't tell us, nohow, could you?" and master Ralph sucked a strawberry between his white, paternal teeth.

"What do you mean, mate?" asked St. Giles, with a stare.

Ralph returned an astonished look at the familiarity, and then spat a strawberry-stalk on St. Giles's foot. He then continued "Why, in course you've bought the house, or else you'd never have made such a hullabaloo with the knocker. As I said afore, how much might you have give for it?"

"I ask your pardon, I'm sure," said St. Giles, "I thought at last everybody was out."

"Everybody but me—for kitchen-maids go for nothing—is. But what did you give for the house, I say?" again repeated the witty Ralph, laughing at his own indomitable humour.

"Lor, Ralph," cried a female head, hanging over the banister; "lor, Ralph, why don't you answer the poor man?" Saying this, the head for a moment disappeared, and then again showed itself on the shoulders of a fat little woman, who bustled down into the hall.

"Now, I tell you what it is," said the youthful footman, glowing very yellow, and holding up his fore-finger at the intruder, "if you don't let me mind my business, you sha'n't come here when they're out at all,—now mind that."

"Ha! if only your dear father could hear you, wouldn't it break his heart! For the seven years we lived together he never said a crooked word to me, and Ralph, you know it. He *was* a man," said the widow in that earnest tone with which widows would sometimes fain convey a sense of value of the past invaluable. "He was a man!"

"I s'pose he was"—replied the filial Ralph—"you've said so such a many times: all I know is, I know nothing about him—and I don't want to know nothing."

"Well, if ever I thought to hear such words come out of that livery! Don't you expect that something will happen to you? Know nothing about your own father! When—only you're a shade or two lighter, for your dear father wasn't ashamed of what God give him to cover him with—only a shade or two, and you're

as like him as one crow 's like another." This Mrs. Gum emphatically clenched with—"And you know you are."

Master Ralph Gum turned a deeper and deeper yellow, as his mother spoke. His indignation, however, at his avowed similitude to his departed sire, was too large to be voluble through a human mouth. He therefore turned abruptly from his widowed parent, and angrily shouted at St. Giles—"What do you want?"

"I want his young lordship," answered St. Giles. "He told me to bring this," and St. Giles presented the card.

"Well, I can read this plain enough," said Ralph.

"And if you can," cried Mrs. Gum, "who have you to thank for the blessing but your dear father? Till his dying day, he couldn't read, sweet fellow; but he made you a gentleman, and yet you know nothing about him."

"You shan't come here at all, if you can't behave yourself," cried Master Ralph to his mother, evidently meaning to keep his word. Then turning to St. Giles, he said—"You 'd better take this to Mr. Tangle."

"Tangle—a—lawyer?" cried St. Giles, with a quick recollection of that wise man of Newgate.

"He 's at the Committee at the Cocoa-Tree: I dare say it 's 'lection business, and he 'll send you down—if you 're worth the money—with the other chaps. I don't know nothing more about it," cried Master Ralph, perceiving that St. Giles was about to make further enquiry—"all I can say to you is, the Cocoa-Tree."

"I 'm a going a little that way, young man," said Mrs. Gum, "and I 'll show you."

"And mind what I say," cried Ralph to his mother, closing the door, and speaking with his face almost jammed between it and the postern, "mind what I say; if you can't behave yourself, you don't come no more here." And then he shut the door.

"Ha! he doesn't mean it—not a bit of it," said Mrs. Gum. "He 's such a good cretur; so like his father—only a little more lively."

"And he 's dead?" said St. Giles, not knowing well what to say.

"And I 'm alone," sighed Mrs. Gum. "His father was a flower, that cretur was: he 'd a kissed the stones I walk upon. He was too honest for this world. He caught his death—nothing shall ever persuade me out of it—upon principle."

"After what fashion?" asked St. Giles.

"Why you see it was in a hard frost; and poor soul! if there was a thing he couldn't 'bide in the world, it was frost. He hated it worser than any snake; and it was nat'ral, for he was born in a hot place, where monkeys and cocoa-nuts come from—this is the way to the Cocoa-Tree. Well, it was a hard frost, and

he was out with the carriage at a state ball at the Palace. He was in full-dress of course—with those dreadful silk stockings. All the other servants put on their gaiters; but he wouldn't—he was so partic'lar to orders. Well, the cold flew to the calves of his legs, and then up into his stomach, and then—oh, young man! I 've never looked at silk stockings that I hav'n't shivered again. That 's the way to the Cocoa-Tree!"—And with this, Mrs. Gum, possibly to hide her emotion, suddenly turned a corner, and left St. Giles alone.

But he needed no pilotage: the Cocoa-Tree was well known to him; and with his best haste he made his way to its hospitality. Arrived, he enquired for Mr. Tangle, and was immediately shown into the presence of that very active legalist, who sat at the head of a table with a heap of papers before him. On each side of the table sat a row of thoughtful men, each with a glass at his hand, all convoked to protect the British Constitution, menaced as it was in its most vital part—a part, by the way, seldom agreed upon by those who talk most about it—by a candidate for the representation of the borough of Liquorish; an intruder upon the property of the Marquess of St. James. The borough, time out of mind, had been the property of the family: to attempt to wrest it from the family grasp was little less felonious than an attack upon the family plate-chest. Twice or thrice there had been murmurs of a threatened contest; but now, on the retirement of Sir George Warmington from the seat, that his young lordship might gracefully drop himself into it, a plebeian candidate, with an alarming amount of money, had absolutely declared himself. Such audacity had stirred from its depths the very purest patriotism of Mr. Tangle, who lost no time in waiting upon Mr. Folder—with whom since the first Sabbath interview in Red Lion Square, he had kept up a running acquaintanceship,—and immediately offering himself, body and the precious soul the body contained, at the service of the Marquess. Mr. Folder had just the order of mind to perceive and value the merits of Tangle; and the lawyer was instantly appointed as the head and heart of the committee sitting at the Cocoa-Tree, for his young Lordship's return for—in the words of Tangle—his own sacred property of Liquorish.

"Well, my good young man," said Tangle to St. Giles, "you of course are one of the right sort? You come to give us a vote? To be sure you do. Well, there 's a post-chaise for you, dinners on the road—hot suppers, and a bottle of generous wine to send you happy to bed. His lordship scorns to give a bribe; but every honest voter has a right to expect the common necessaries of life."

"I 've never a vote," said St. Giles, "nothing of the sort. I wish I had."

"You wish you had, indeed!" cried Tangle. "None of your impudence, fellow. What brings you here, then?"

"I 've been to his lordship's house, and they sent me here. His lordship told me to come to him in London, and give me this card. He told me as how he 'd take me into his service," added St. Giles with a slight shudder, for as Tangle looked full upon him, he remembered all the horrors of Newgate—all brought to his memory by that legal stare. Years had passed over Tangle, and save that the lines in his face were cut a little deeper, and marked a little blacker, his were the same features—the very same—that frowned on the boy horse-stealer in the condemned cell.

"Well, his lordship 's not here," said Tangle; "and he 's too busy now to attend to such raff as you. Away with you."

"Stop, stop," cried a low, whistling voice; and a gentleman with a very white, thistledown kind of hair, a small, withered face, and remarkably little eyes, called back St. Giles. "I suppose, my man," said the aged Mr. Folder, putting on his best possible look of vigour, and endeavouring to make the most of his shrunk anatomy, "I suppose, my fine fellow, you can fight? Eh? You look as if you could fight?" And then the querist chuckled, as though he talked of an enjoyment peculiarly adapted to man.

"Why, yes, sir," said St. Giles, "I can fight a little, I hope, in a good cause."

"Upon my life, Mr. Folder," said Tangle, "the world 's come to something when such as he is to judge of causes."

"But he 's a stout fellow—a very stout fellow," whispered Folder to the lawyer; "and as I 'm credibly informed that the other side have hired an army of ruffians—I even know the very carpenter who has made the bludgeons—why, we mustn't be taken by surprise. I 'm never for violence; but when our blessed constitution is threatened by a rabble, we can't be too strong."

Mr. Tangle nodded sagaciously at this, and again addressed St. Giles. "Well, then, fellow, if you 're not above earning an honest bit of bread, we 'll find employment for you. Besides, you may then see his lordship, and he may have an opportunity of knowing what you 're worth."

"I 'll do anything for his lordship, bless him!" cried St. Giles.

"There, now, none of your blessings. We 're too old birds to be caught with such chaff as that. Your duty as an honest man will be to knock down everybody that wears a yellow riband, and to ask no questions." Such were the instructions of Tangle; and St. Giles, who had no other hope than to see his lordship, bowed a seeming acquiescence.

"You may get some refreshment," whiffled Folder, "and so be ready to start with the next batch. Mind, however, at least until

the day of nomination, to keep yourself sober; on that day, why everything's *ad libitum*. When I say *ad libitum*, I mean that you will be expected to take the best means to defend our blessed constitution. And when I say the best means—"

"He knows, Mr. Folder; he knows," interrupted Tangle. "He'll drink like a fish, and fight like a cock; I can tell it by the looks of him:" and with this compliment the attorney waved St. Giles from the apartment; a waiter taking possession of him, and showing him to a smaller room wherein were congregated about a dozen minstrels, especially hired by Tangle to play away the hearts and voices of the voters of Liquorish. Our blessed constitution was to be supported by a big drum, two or three trumpets, as many clarionets, an oboe, a fiddle or two, and a modest triangle. "There was nothing like music to bring folks up to the poll," was the avowal of Tangle. "Fools were always led by the ears. When they heard 'Hearts of oak,' they always thought they had the commodity in their own breasts—and never paused at the bribery oath, when 'Britons strike home' was thundering beside 'em. He'd carried many an election with nothing but music, eating and drinking, and plenty of money. Music was only invented to gammon human nature; and that was one of the reasons women were so fond of it." And animated by this forlorn creed, Mr. Tangle had ordered the aforesaid minstrels to meet that day at the Cocoa-Tree that they might be duly transported to the borough of Liquorish. There was no doubt that musicians might have been engaged on or near the spot; but there was something tasteful and generous in hiring harmony at the mart of all luxuries—London. All the minstrels—Apollo is so often half-brother to Bacchus—were very drunk; and therefore gave an uproarious welcome to St. Giles. Brief, however, was the greeting; for in a few minutes the waiter returned with the intelligence that "the van was at the door; and that Mr. Tangle's order was that they should drive off directly; otherwise they wouldn't be at Liquorish that blessed night." Hereupon there was a clamorous order for a glass all round; the minstrels being unanimous in their determination not to stir a foot or strike a note in defence of the glorious constitution without it. Mr. Tangle knew his mercenaries too well to oppose such patriotism; therefore the liquor was brought and swallowed, and the band, with St. Giles among them, climbed into the strange, roomy vehicle at the door; the driver, with the flame of brandy burning in his face, taking the reins. The horses, employed on the occasion, had evidently been degraded for the nonce. They were large, sleek, spirited creatures, prematurely removed from a carriage, to whirl a plebeian vehicle thirty miles from London, at the quickest speed.

There seemed a sad, an ominous contrast between the driver and the beasts. He might continue to hold the reins between his fumbling fingers; he might maintain his seat; the horses might not, contemptuous of the human brute above them, cast off his government. Such were evidently the thoughts of the waiter as he cast an eye from the steeds to the driver, and then laughed as the wickedness of human nature will sometimes laugh at its inward prophecy of mischief. In that leer, the waiter foresaw the driver and the contents of the caravan suddenly weltering like frogs in a ditch.

"All ready, gemmen?" hiccupped the driver, trying to look round at his harmonious load.

"Wait a minute," cried the first clarionet, who was also the leader; "jest a minute," and then he made his instrument give a horrible scream and grunt, whereupon he cried "all right," and burst into "See the conquering hero comes," his co-mates following him with all the precision permitted by rough-riding and hard drinking. And so they took their way from the Cocoa-Tree, playing beyond Shoreditch an anticipatory strain of triumph—a glorifying measure that was to herald the conquest of young St. James in the cause of purity and truth.

"I think we 've given 'em their belly-full now," at length said the hautboy, removing the peace-breaker from his lips. "We needn't play to the green bushes," and the musician looked about him at the opening country. "I say," and he called to the driver, "I do hear that the other side isn't a going to have no music at all; no flags; no open houses for independent voters. A good deal he knows about the wants of the people. Bless his innocence! Thinks to get into Parliament without music!"

"Well, it is wonderful," observed one of the fiddlers, an old, thin-faced, somnolent-looking man, with the tip of his nose like an old pen dyed with red ink—"it is odd to consider what ignoramuses they are that think to go into Parliament. Why you can no more make a member without music than bricks without straw; it is'nt to be done. Speechifying 's very well; but there 's nothing that stirs the hearts of the people, and makes 'em think o' their rights, like a jolly band."

"One bang of my drum," observed the humble advocate of that instrument, "sometimes goes more to make a Member of Parliament than all his fine sayings. Bless your souls! if we could only come to the bottom of the matter, we should find that it was in fact our instruments that very often made the law-makers, and not the folks as vote for 'em: my big drum 's represented in Parliament, though I dare be sworn there 's not a member that will stoop to own it."

"And my clarionet 's represented too," cried the leader, advocating his claim.

"Yes, and my triangle," exclaimed the player of that three-sided instrument, wholly unconscious of the satiric truth that fell from him.

"Capital ale here!" cried the driver, with increasing thickness of speech, as he drew up at an inn-door. It was plain that the county of Essex—or at least that part of it that led from London to Liquorish—was peculiarly blessed with good ale: for at every inn, the driver pulled up short, and proclaimed the heart-cheering news—"Capital ale here!" They were the only words he uttered from the time he had passed Shoreditch-church. Indeed he seemed incapable of any other speech: he seemed a sort of human parrot, reared and taught in a brewery, endowed with no other syllables than "Capital ale here!" And still, as we have hinted, the words grew thicker and thicker in his mouth; too thick to drop from his lips, and so they rumbled in his jaws, whilst he cast a hopeless look about him, despairing to get them out; yet at every new hostelry making a sound that plainly meant—"Capital ale here." Happily for him, according to his dim idea of felicity, he mumbled to quick interpreters. Hence, ere half the journey was accomplished, the driver seemed possessed of no more intelligence than a lump of reeking clay. He twiddled the reins between his fingers, and sometimes opened his eyes, that saw not the backs of the horses they tried to look down upon. But the brutes were intelligent; they, it appeared, knew the road; knew, it almost seemed so, the filthy imbecility of the driver; and so, with either a pity or contempt for the infirmity of human nature, they took care of their charioteer and his besotted passengers. True it is, St. Giles at times cast anxious looks about him; at times, ventured to hint a doubt of the sobriety of the driver, whereupon, he was called a fool, a coward, and a nincompoop, by his companions, who considered his anxiety for the safety of his bones as an extreme piece of conceit, very offensive to the rest of the company. "You won't break sooner than any of us, will you?" asked the first fiddle. "Besides, you 're too drunk for any harm to come to you." St. Giles was sober as a water-god. "A good deal too drunk; for if you knew anything—I say, that was a jolt, wasn't it?"—(for the vehicle had bounced so violently against a milestone, that the shock half-opened the eyes of the driver)—"you'd know that a man who 's properly drunk never comes to no sort of harm. There 's a good angel always living in a bottle; you 've only to empty it, and the angel takes care of you directly: sees you home, if it 's ever so dark, and finds the keyhole for you, if your hand is ever so unsteady. No:

it 's only your sneak-up chaps, that are afraid of the glass that get into trouble, break their bones, and catch rheumatiz, and all that. Whereas, if your skin 's as full of liquor as a grape 's full of juice, you may lay yourself down in a ditch, like a little baby in his mother's lap, and wake in the morning for all the world like a opening lily."

The latter part of this sentence was scarcely heard by St. Giles, for the horses had suddenly burst into a gallop; the vehicle swayed to and fro, flew round a turning of the road, and striking against the projecting roots of a huge tree, threw all its human contents into a green-mantled pond on the other side of the narrow highway, one wheel rolling independently off. St Giles, unhurt, but drenched to the skin, immediately set about rescuing his all but helpless companions. He tugged and tugged at the inert mass, the driver, and at length succeeded in dragging him from the pond, and setting him against a bank. He groaned, and his lips moved, and then he grunted—"Capital ale here." The first clarionet scrambled from the pool, and seizing his instrument, that had rolled into the mud, immediately struck up "See the conquering hero comes!" The first drum, inspired by the melodious courage of his companion, banged away at the parchment, but alas! for the first fiddle: the bacchanal good angel, of which he had but a minute since so loudly vaunted, had forsaken him at his worst need; and that prime Cremona was rescued from water, mud, and duckweed with a broken arm. He was, however, unconscious of the injury; and before he was well out of the pond, assured St. Giles that if he would only have the kindness and good-fellowship to let him alone, he could sleep where he was like an angel.

It was about ten o'clock at night, but for the season very dark. St. Giles, from the time that he could see the milestones, knew that he must be near the wished-for borough. It was in vain to talk to his companions. Some were senseless and stupid; some roaring bravado, and some trying to give vent to the most horrid music. Again and again St. Giles hallooed, but the louder he cried, the stronger the big drum beat—the more demoniacally the clarionet screamed. There was no other way: he would instantly seek the first habitation, that he might return with succour to the wet, the drunk, and the wounded.

CHAPTER XVIII.

St. Giles had run pretty briskly for some quarter of an hour, when he discovered in the distance—glowing amid trees—a speck of light. It was plain, there was a human habitation, though away from the main road. He paused for a moment: should he follow the highway, or strike off in the direction of that taper? Another moment, and he had leapt the hedge, and was making fast for the beacon. He crossed two or three fields, and then found himself in a winding green lane: now, as he ran on, he lost the light; and now again, like hope renewed, it beamed upon him. At length he came full upon the homestead. It was an old circular dwelling; so thronged about by tree and bush, that it seemed impossible that any light within could manifest itself to the distant wayfarer. A type this, as it will appear, of the heart of the master. He affected a solitude from the world: he believed that he was hidden from his fellow-man, and yet the inextinguishable goodness that glowed within him, made him a constant mark for the weary and wretched. For a brief space, St. Giles considered the cottage. It was plastered with rough-cast; at the first glance, seemingly a poor, squalid nook. But a closer survey showed it to be a place where the household gods fared not upon black bread and mere water. The garden patch before it was filled with choicest flowers; not a weed intruded its idle life upon them. It was a place where neatness and comfort seemed to have met in happiest society. St. Giles listened, and heard low voices within. At length, he knocked.

"Who 's there?" said the master of the house. "If it 's for the taxes, come in the morning."

"It 's a traveller," answered St. Giles, "that wants help for a lot of poor souls that 's tumbled in a ditch."

In a moment the door was opened, and a grey-headed, large-faced, burly man, with a candle in his hand, stood at the threshold. He warily placed the light between the speaker and himself, shading it, and with a suspicious glance looked hard upon St. Giles; whose eager soul was in a moment in his eyes; and then, trembling from head to foot, he cried, "God be blessed, sir—and is it indeed you?"

"My name, traveller, is Capstick," said the man, bending his brows upon St. Giles, and looking determined to be too much for the stranger at his door; a new comer, it was very likely, come

to trick him. "My name is Capstick, what may be yours? Here, Jem, you slug—do you know this pilgrim?"

Another moment, and Jem—old Bright Jem, with grey grizzled head, shrunk face, and low bent shoulders—stood in the door-way. Ere Jem could speak, St. Giles discovered him: "And you, too, here! Lord, who 'd have hoped it?"

"Don't know a feather on him," said Jem, "but he seems to know us, wet as he is."

"Why, that 's it, you see. A fellow from a horse-pond will know anybody who 's a supper and a bed to give him. It 's the base part of our base nature." And then the misanthrope turned to St. Giles. "Well, my wet friend, as you know my name and Jem's, what mark may you carry in the world? What name have you been ruddled with?"

St. Giles paused a moment; and then stammering said, "You shall know that by-and-bye."

"Very well," cried Capstick, "we can wait." Saying this, he again stepped back into the cottage, and was about to close the door.

"Oh, never mind me," cried St. Giles; "I'll get on as I can; all I ask of you is to come and help the poor creturs: some of 'em dying with their hurts for what I know."

"Jem," said Capstick, "we 're fools to do it; but it 's clear, we were born to be fools. So, get the lantern, that we may go and bury the dead. Do make haste, Jem," urged Capstick with strange misanthropy; albeit Jem moved about with all the vigour time had left him. "How you do crawl—though, after all, I don't see why you should n't. What 's people in a ditch to them who 've a warm bed and a snug roof over 'em? Then as for dying, death 's every man's own business; quite a private affair, in which, as I see, nobody else has any right to trouble himself. Now, do come along, you old caterpillar," and Capstick, staff in hand, stept forth, Jem limping after him.

Whilst Capstick leads the way—a shorter one than that traversed by St. Giles—into the main road, we may explain to the reader the combined causes that have presented the muffin-maker and linkman as little other than eremites on the skirts of the borough of Liquorish. Mr. Capstick had turned his muffins into a sufficient number of guineas for the rest of his days, and therefore determined to retire from Seven Dials to the country. Mrs. Capstick would never hear of going to be buried alive from London; and therefore resolved upon nothing more remote than a suburban whereabout. Hackney, or Pimlico, or Islington, she might be brought to endure; but no, if she knew herself, nothing should make her go and live, as she pathetically put it, like an owl

in a bush. Capstick met all these objections in his usually lofty way: "she was a foolish woman, but would learn better." This, again and again he avowed; though no man had less faith in the avowal than himself. Still, it kept up his dignity continually to call his wife a foolish woman; albeit, he was generally compelled to yield to the folly he imperiously condemned. Matters were at this crisis, when suddenly Mrs. Capstick fell sick and died. "She would have been an excellent creature," Capstick said, "if it had not been her misfortune to be a woman. However, poor soul! she could not help that; and therefore, why should he blame her?" Very often, Capstick would so deliver himself, his eyes filling with tears, as he tried to twitch his lips into a cynical smile at all womankind, and at the late Mrs. Capstick in particular. "Still," he would say, "she had her virtues. Every day of her life would she walk round every one of his shirt-buttons that no one of them might be missing. He hated all tombstone flourishes, otherwise he would have had that special virtue—he meant the buttons—specially named in her epitaph. One comfort, however, he always had to think of: whatever his love was for her, he never let her know it. Oh dear no! It was like showing the weak part of a fortress to all comers: some day or the other 'twould be sure to be taken advantage of."

And the death of Mrs. Capstick—the muslin-maker would never confess that for months he pined like a solitary dove at the loss—left him free to choose his abode. Whereupon he quitted London, and built himself a house almost buried in a wood some two miles from Liquorish; and this house, or hut, setting himself up as a sort of Diogenes—kind, butter hearted impostor!—he called with a flourish, The Tub! The satire was lost upon nearly all the inhabitants of Liquorish, many of whom discovered, as they believed, a very natural cause for so strange a name. There was no doubt—it was urged by many—that Capstick had, in his day, made large sums of money by smuggling: hence, out of pure gratitude to the source of his fortune, he had called his cottage a Tub. Indeed, two or three of the shrewder sort dropt mystic hints about the possibility of finding, somehow attached to the Tub, an unlawful still. People—this apothegm clenched the suspicion in the hearts of some—people did not live in a wood for nothing!

Bright Jem had lost his cordial, good-natured mate, some four or five years before the death of Mrs. Capstick. He would, in his despair, tell the muslin-maker that "his poor Susan had somehow carried away his heart into her grave with her; he had no mind to do nothing." Sometimes, too, he would borrow a melancholy similitude from the skittle-ground, and shaking his head, would

exclaim that "he was a down pin." To this sorrow, the muffin-maker would apply what he thought a sharp philosophy by way of cure. He would mean to drop gall and vinegar into the hurts of his poor and poorer neighbour—for, as Jem would often declare, Susan seemed to have taken away all his luck with her—but he could deal in nought save oil and honey. Capstick flourished, and Bright Jem faded. Great and increasing was the fame of the muffins; but the link waned, and waned, and Bright Jem, weakened by sickness, almost crippled by the effects of cold, would have been passed to the workhouse, as he would often say, to "pick oakum and wait for the grave-digger." This fate, however, was warded from him by the stony-hearted misanthrope, Capstick; by the muffin-maker, who, declaring that all men were wolves and tigers, would, at their least need, tend the carnivora, as though they were bruised and wounded lambs. Hear him talk, and he would heap burning ashes on the head of weak humanity. Watch his doings, and with moistened eyes he would pour a precious ointment there. For years it was the weekly practice of Capstick to visit Jem in his lonely room in Short's Gardens, to enjoy a fling at the world: to find out the bad marks of the monster, or, as he would say, "to count the spots on the leopard's coat." Every Friday, he would come and take his pipe with Jem, that he might call all men wretches without having his wife to contradict him; when, having eased his bile and laid Jem's weekly pension on the mantelpiece, he would return home with lightened heart to business. "The world's a bad lot, Jem; a very bad lot: how it 's been suffered to grow as old as it is, it 's more than I can tell. Like an old block of wood, it 's fit for nothing but burning: God bless you, Jem." And with this opinion, with this benison, would the muffin-maker commonly depart.

Capstick, however, when his wife died, resolved to carry Bright Jem into the country with him. "You 'll be a good deal of use there, Jem," said the muffin-maker, when he broke the business.

"Not a morsel in the world," answered the humble linkman. "I 've been used to nothing but London streets. I knows nothing that lives or grows in the country. Poor dear Susan could never teach me primroses from polyanthuses, though she knowed all about 'em. I 'm a sinner, if I think I ever saw a cock-robin in all my life. What can I do in the country?"

"You shall learn to garden, Jem. That 's the grand, the true employment of man," cried the muffin-maker, warming. "Why, here have I been for years an old rascal, grinning, and bowing, and ducking behind my counter to make money out of two-legged things as false as myself,—and do you call that the dignity of

life? Do you call it truth, Jem? Now, real dignity 's in a real spade; real truth 's in the earth. She gives us profits—if we only deserve 'em—a hundred and a hundredfold, and there 's no telling lies, no cheating one another to have 'em. They 're a little different, Jem, to the profits we get upon 'Change. The earth, like dear old Eve, is always a mother to us; whereas when men deal with men, how often do they go to work like so many Cains and Abels, only they use thumping lies instead of clubs. I tell you, Jem, you shall be my gardener."

"I don't know an inion from a carrot, afore it 's out o' the ground," said Bright Jem, showing, as he thought, good cause against the appointment. Capstick, however, overruled the objection, and so, in due season, Jem was housed in the Tub.

And thus, journeying across the fields to the scene of St. Giles's disaster, have we explained to the reader the why and the wherefore of the sudden appearance of the muffin-maker and his friend.

Arrived at the place of accident, not a soul was to be found. The only evidence of the truth of St. Giles's story was discoverable in the overturned caravan, and the parted wheel. The horses as well as passengers had been taken on. Capstick took the lantern from Jem, and looked suspiciously around him. He then held the light to St. Giles, trying to read his face; and then he shook his head, as though baulked by what the misanthrope would call, the "brute-human hieroglyphs; the monkey, and owl, and dog, and fox, that lived in every countenance." St. Giles—he was wet as a fish—gave a slight shiver.

"It isn't above three miles to the Rose," said Capstick.

"Thank 'ee, sir; is it straight on, sir? I can run there in no time, and a run won't do me no harm," said St. Giles.

"The road 's narrow; the hedges are high, there 's no moon, and you can't run very fast with a lantern," observed Capstick.

"I 'll find my way, sir, I 've no doubt on it—straight on?" and St. Giles prepared to start.

Capstick laid his hand upon St. Giles's arm, and then said aside to Jem—"The poor wretch is wet as water. He may miss his road; may take a fever; not that that would much matter, for there 's vagabonds a plenty in the world. Still—there isn't a great deal of you, Jem; and he 's a slimmish chap—and, if you ar'n't very much afraid of your throat, I think for one night the fellow might turn in with you. We 're wrong in doing it," said Capstick emphatically.

"Not at all," said Jem, in a louder note.

"Well, you sir," cried Capstick to St. Giles, "let 's go back again: you 'll find this a nearer road to bed than along the high-

way." Saying this, the master of the Tub turned back towards his dwelling-place. "I can walk faster than you, Jem; so I 'll push on;" and the muffin-maker mended his pace.

"We live here quite by ourselves, just like a brace o' ermits," said Bright Jem.

"All alone!" cried St. Giles, "where 's your wife, then?"

"My wife! I don't know how you know'd I ever had one—my wife, dear cretur! is in one of them stars above us," said Jem, "and whichever one it is, this I know, it isn't the worse for her being in it." Jem paused a moment; and then, somewhat sadly, asked, "How did you know I ever had a wife?"

"Why," replied St. Giles, "you look as if you had; there 's a sort of married mark upon some people."

"And so there is; a sort of weddin'-ring mark, just like the mark of a collar. I didn't know I had it, though; but here we are,"—and Bright Jem paused at the Tub, and Capstick immediately came to the door.

"After all, I 've been thinking you may lose your way, and as you 're a little wet, why perhaps you 'd better come in, and when we 've had a pipe or so, we 'll see what 's to be done." Such was the hospitable invitation of Capstick. St. Giles paused a moment; whereupon Capstick caught him by the arm, and crying—"Don't stay there, wasting the candle," pulled him in. "Now, as we can't have any of your wet rags drowning the place to give us all cold, you 'll just go in there, and put on what comes to hand." With this, Capstick pointed to an inner room, which St. Giles obediently entered, and finding there various articles of dress—all of them more than a thought too vast for him—he straightway relieved himself of his well-soaked apparel, Bright Jem assisting at the change.

"You might jump out on 'em," said Jem; "but never mind that; a bad fit 's nothin' to a bad cold: I know that, for I 've had colds o' all sorts, and ought to be allowed to speak on 'em."

"Jem, get the supper," cried Capstick. "You sometimes eat, I suppose? You 're not a cherub, quite?" and the cynic of the Tub tried to smile very severely at his guest.

"Thank'ee, sir," said St. Giles, his heart warming towards his old benefactor; "I can eat up anything."

"Bad as our slugs, Jem," observed Capstick; "and they do crawl and crawl over our cabbages, like the world's slander over a good name. You may kill 'em, it's true; but there 's the slime, Jem; the slime."

"Here 's the bread and cheese, and all that 's left o' the gammon o' bacon," remarked Jem, turning from the metaphorical

to the real. "There's one comfort, howsumever; the ale isn't out." And Jem authenticated his speech by speedily producing a large brown jug, crowned, as he said, "with a noble wig o' froth. There isn't a lawyer in all the land," added Jem, "with a wig like that."

"No," said Capstick, who had by this time lighted his pipe; "nor with anything like it under it."

St. Giles, having eaten, and tested the merits of the ale below the wig—which to his taste covered nothing false or vapid—looked around him with a look of large content. The hospitable cynic caught the glance, and despite of himself, smiled benignly.

"If you please, sir," said St. Giles, who could have fallen at Capstick's feet, "I should like to tell you who I am."

"Not to-night," said Capstick, "I don't want to hear it. We're early people here, and the cock always calls us out of bed. Take another horn of ale; or one, or two, or three, and then suppose you go to rest."

St. Giles filled the horn; and then looking at Capstick in a way that made him turn round and round in his chair, for there was an earnestness in the man that he could not, by his own theory of human wickedness, account for, St. Giles cried, "God bless you, sir!"

"Thank'ee,—that can do nobody any harm, whoever says it, and whoever it's said to. The same to you, and good night," and Capstick rose to retire to his sleep. As he was leaving the room, he paused at the door, and said in a very loud voice, "You've loaded my pistols, of course, Jem?"

"Pistols!" cried Jem, with all his face all wonder.

"For," said Capstick, coughing, "I know the heart of man; and in a lonely place like this, pistols—double-loaded—ar'n't sometimes the worst things to have against it. Good night," and shaking St. Giles by the hand, Capstick stalked from the room looking tremendous sagacity.

"Shall I tell you who I am?" asked St. Giles, placing his hand on Jem's knee.

"Not to-night," said Jem. "It's the only thing that my dear Susan and me ever quarrelled about—not that we ever quarrelled—she was too good a soul for that—but I never could be curious. Now, somehow, women are so. If there's only a mouse-hole in the house, it's a relief to their mind to know where it is. Lor! when we talk of quarrelling! When she was alive, I always thought she begun it—not, as I say, we ever quarrelled—but now she's gone, it's me that seems the brute."

"And the wives of both of you is dead?" said St. Giles.

"Both in heaven," said Jem, with beautiful confidence. "Mrs.

Capstick used to keep herself a good deal above Susan when she was here; but, poor thing! I dare say she 's found out her mistake now."

"That 's a place, depend upon it," said St. Giles, "where we make all these matters quite straight."

"No doubt on it," answered Jem; "but after all, it 's a pity we don't make 'em a little straighter here. 'Twould bring heaven a little nearer this world, wouldn't it?"

"Well," cried St. Giles, "'t will be all right at last."

"In course it will," said Jem. "Nevertheless, my good feller—for I think you are a good feller—why should we wait for the last to begin it? Will you have any more ale? It isn't often a stranger comes here."

"Not a drop: I 'm full; and my heart 's fuller than all my body. Let 's go to bed," said St. Giles; and immediately Jem rose, and showed him to their chamber.

Hours passed, and St. Giles could not sleep. All the scenes of his long life—for how does misery lengthen life, making grey-headed men of mere maturity, compelling childhood, that should have beautiful visions, foreshadowing beautiful truths around it—to keep a day-book of the wrongs committed on it!—all these scenes passed before the wanderer. Such a nature knows the amount of life only by the balance of injury against it. And such—need we say so to the reader?—was St. Giles. Hence, young as he was, he was hoary in the hard experience of a sordid world. He lay, and counted year by year, nay, week by week, of his life—as first lighted by memory—and was melted by gratitude, by wonder, at the accident that had brought him beneath the protection of those who, in all his after vice, and after misery, had still made in him a belief in goodness; in the world's charity: in the inextinguishable kindness of the human heart. All his cares—all his anxieties for the future—seemed to pass away in the great assurance of his present fortune. And so he lay sleepless, bewildered with happiness. At length he slept.

The sun shone reproachfully into his room, as he was aroused by Bright Jem. "I say," said Jem, "will you come up, or will you take another pull atween the sheets? It 's nicer in the garden, if you can only think so."

"To be sure," said St. Giles, "I 'm with you in a minute." Hurrying on his clothes—he found them already dried and placed by his bed—he soon joined Jem in the garden.

"I can't do much of the rough work," said Jem, as he feebly managed his spade; "but it 's wonderful how I 've taken to the business for all that. When I think o' the years and years I

lived in Short's Gardens, never knowing which side o' the world the sun got up—never seeing him get up—never hearing a bird whistle except in a cage—thinking there was hardly anything upon the earth but bricklayers' and carpenters' work,—well, I do feel it a blessing in my old age, that I can see the trees of a summer morning waving about me. I do feel happy with all things, seeing them to be so bright and beautiful, and brimming over, as I may say, with God's goodness."

"That 's true, Jem—very true," said St. Giles; "and, I 'm glad to see it, you look happy."

"As a butterfly," cried Jem. "And, Lord love you! when I sometimes think what I was in London; when I think o' the poor folks that 's there now—the poor creturs that 's as fine as maybugs for a year or so, and then tumble, as I may say, in the mud, and get trod on by anybody, till they die and are no more thought on than pisoned rats,—well, I am thankful that I 've been brought into this place to feel myself, as I may say, somewhat cleaned from London mud, and my heart opened by the sweet and pretty things about me."

"And you didn't know nothing of gardening, Jem, when you first come?" said St. Giles.

"I tell you, not a bit. But you 've no thought on't how soon a man with the will in him, learns. I shall never forget what Mr. Capstick said to me, when we first come, and I did n't think I could take to it. 'Jem,' says he to me, 'a garden is a beautiful book, writ by the finger of God; every flower and every leaf 's a letter; you 've only to learn 'em—and he 's a poor dunce that can't, if he will, do that—to learn 'em, and join 'em, and then to go on reading and reading, and you 'll find yourself carried away from the earth to the skies by the beautiful story you 're going through.'"

"Mr. Capstick! He 's a kind, humane cretur," said St. Giles.

"He 's not a man," said Jem with emphasis; "he 's a lump o' honey that would pass itself off for bitter allys. A lump o' honey! I often say the bees made him. Yes," and Jem returned to his garden—"you don't know what beautiful thoughts—for they 're nothing short—grow out o' the ground, and seem to talk to a man. And then there 's some flowers, they always seem to me like overdutiful children: tend 'em ever so little, and they come up, and flourish, and show, as I may say, their bright and happy faces to you. Now, look here," and Jem pointed to a flower at his foot. "I sowed this last year—jist flung it in the mould—and you 'd hardly believe it, it 's come up again by itself. You wouldn't think now,"—and Jem looked suddenly professorial—"you wouldn't think it was a *Pimlico specissimo tulipum bulbum?*"

"What 's that in English?" asked St. Giles.

"Ain't got no other name, as I know of; but there is no doubt it 's a tulup. I didn't think I could do it," said Jem, with the smallest touch of self-complacency, "but I know the Latin names of half the flowers you see."

"Well, they don't smell no sweeter for that, do they?" cried St. Giles.

Bright Jem paused a moment; and then, with a half-serious face, answered, "I don't know that they don't."

St. Giles felt no disposition to argue the point; therefore suddenly changed his ground. "Isn't Mr. Capstick late?" he asked.

"Late! he 's never late," cried Bright Jem. "He 's left the Tub these two hours. Gone for a walk."

"The Tub! What Tub?" asked St. Giles.

"Why, the house. It 's called the Tub, after a tub that some wise man—as Mr. Capstick tells me he was—lived in a many thousand years ago. Mr. Capstick swears it was a vinegar tub."

"Well, that 's droll," said St. Giles. "Call a house a tub?"

"Why not? But if you 've anything to say against it, here comes the master." And as Bright Jem spoke, the early misanthrope entered the garden.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. Capstick, however, came not alone. A pace or two behind him followed an old man, whose kind, familiar greeting of Bright Jem showed him to be no stranger at the hermitage. "Well, James," said the visitor, "and how is all your blooming family?" Kingcup and he looked benignantly at the shrubs and flowers.

"Why, thank 'ee, sir, as you see," said Bright Jem, smiling paternally, and with his spade tenderly patting a lump of earth, as though he loved it. "My family 's jist like any other children; some back 'ard, some for 'ard. Some will run up, and branch out like this *Snapsis Nigger*—"

"I perceive," said the visitor, with his best gravity—"it is the common mustard."

"Jist so," affirmed Jem very stolidly, "and some will grow jist as you trim 'em, like this *buckshouse semperwirings*."

"Very true; the box-plant is obedient," said the new-comer, with continued deference to Jem's scholarship. "The box is obedient."

"The box, or, as we call it, the *buckshouse semperwirings*, is a good deal like a 'oman," said Jem, very confidently.

Capstick trumpeted a loud, short cough; his frequent manner, when astonished or offended by any human assertion.

"Like a 'oman," repeated Jem, at once understanding the objection of his patron. "And I 'll prove it. You 've only got to trim it into a shape at first, and what a little trouble makes it always keep to it!"

"There may be something in the simile," said Capstick, with his best malignity; "for I have seen the tree cut into a peacock."

"Well, that was all the choice o' the gardener. You 'll own it, Mr. Capstick; it might have been cut into a dove?" cried Jem.

"It might, originally," answered Capstick: "but I know the nature of the thing. 'Twould have been certain to branch into a peacock. To be sure, there 's this to be said for the gardener, poor fool! though the thing should grow with a tail as long as a kite, because he once thought it a dove, he 'd think it a dove for ever."

"It couldn't be—impossible," said Jem.

"Why, look there," cried Capstick, pointing to a yew fantastically mutilated, "look at that dragon."

"Dragon!" cried Jem, "it 's a angel, with its outspread wings. I cut it myself; it 's my own angel."

"Happy, fond humanity!" said Capstick, turning and laying his hand upon the visitor's shoulder. "How many a dragon to all the world beside, seems a blessed angel to its owner! Who would disturb so comforting a faith?" And then he added to Jem, "It is an angel. 'Tis a pity he hasn't a trumpet."

"It 's a growin," said Jem; "it 's there, though nobody but myself can see it."

"'Tis sometimes so with the trumpets of men," observed Capstick. "And now we 'll to breakfast."

"And you 'll own," said Jem, determined upon conquest, "that the *buckshouse semperwirings* is like the 'oman speeces? To be sure it is. Look at it even in a border; and doesn't it remind you of a quiet, tidy little cretur that keeps her house so nice and clean, and lets nothing dirty in it? You 'll agree—"

"Is the breakfast ready?" asked Capstick.

"It is," answered Jem, "all but the eggs. The fowls have been very good to us, though; there 's twenty on 'em."

"The breakfast ready! Then the beast that is raging within me," said Capstick, "will own to anything. Twenty eggs! 'Tis wonderful how hunger sharpens arithmetic. It is but five a-piece," and the misanthrope for the first time turned to St. Giles; and then straightway passed into the cottage. A breakfast, solid and

various, lay upon the board. "There 's no whet to the appetite," said Capstick, "like early dew. Nothing for the stomach like grass and field-flowers, taken with a fasting eye at five in the morning. 'Twas Adam's own salad, and that 's why he lived to nine hundred and thirty."

"Think you," said the visitor, chipping an egg-shell, "think you that Adam, before the fall, ate eggs?"

"I can't say," said Capstick; "but recollecting the things I have read, the question would make a very pretty book. 'Tis a pity the matter wasn't stirred two or three hundred years ago. How many thousand throats might have been cut upon it! How many men and women roasted like live oysters! For the wisdom of humanity, 'tis a great miss. How popes might have thundered about it! What *Te Deums* have been chanted; what maledictions—and all with the melted-butter voice of a Christian—pronounced! The world has had a great loss—a very great loss." And Capstick sighed.

"I can hardly see that," says Jem. "It seems to me that this blessed world will never want something to quarrel about, so long as there 's two straws upon it."

"Why, there have been the Battles of the Straws," observed Capstick, "although for certain purposes they 've been called after other names." And then, for a time, the breakfast was silently continued; when suddenly Capstick cried out, "Beast that I am! I have forgotten Velvet!"

"Velvet! Who is he?" asked the visitor.

"An excellent fellow, Master Kingcup," said Capstick: "a worthy creature after my own heart. We became acquainted last frost; it was a road-side meeting, and I brought him here to the Tub. You would hardly think it; but though I saved him from a wintry death, and have comforted him like my own flesh and blood—"

"He isn't a bit like it," cried Jem.

"Like my own flesh and blood," repeated Capstick, with a reproving look, "he has neither bitten nor slandered me, nor lifted my latch to midnight thieves, nor in fact done anything that a friend you have benefited should do." At these words, St. Giles, forgetful of the misanthropic drolling of his host, shifted somewhat uneasily in his seat. He thought of the muffins bestowed upon his boyhood, and of the discomfiture he had afterwards inflicted on his benefactor. "Here, Velvet—Velvet," cried Capstick; and Bright Jem sat with a grave smile enjoying the expectation of Mr. Kingcup. "With all the coaxing bestowed upon him, 'tis such a humble soul!" said Capstick. "He never puts himself forward—never. I 'll wager ye, now, one of these

egg-shells," and Capstick rose and looked about him, "that I shall find him quietly curled up in a corner. I knew it—there he is." With this, Capstick took two steps from his chair, stooped, and in a moment returning to his seat, placed a hedgehog on the table.

"Humph!" said Kingcup, "'tis an odd creature for a bosom friend."

"Give me all bosom friends like him," cried Capstick. "For then there 'd be no deceit in 'em: you 'd see the worst of 'em at the beginning. Now, look at this fine honest fellow. What plain, straightforward truths he bears about him! You see at once that he is a living pincushion with the pins' points upwards, and instantly you treat him after his open nature. You know he 's not to be played at ball with: you take in with a glance all that his exterior signifies, and ought to love him for his frankness. Poor wretch! 'tis a thousand and a thousand times the ruin of him. He has, it is true, an outside of thorns—heaven made him with them—but a heart of honey. A meek, patient thing! And yet, because of his covering, the world casts all sorts of slanders upon him; accuses him of wickedness he could not, if he would, commit. And so he is kicked and cudgelled, and made the cruellest sport of; his persecutors all the while thinking themselves the best of people for their worst of treatment. He bears a plain exterior; he shows so many pricking truths to the world, that the world, in revenge, couples every outside point with an interior devil. He is made a martyr for this iniquity—he hides nothing. Poor Velvet!" and Capstick very gently stroked the hedgehog, and proffered it a slice of apple and a piece of bread.

"'Tis a pity," said Kingcup, "that all hedgehogs ar'n't translated after your fashion."

"What a better world 'twould make of it!" answered the cynic. "But no, sir, no; that 's the sort of thing the world loves," and Capstick pointed to a handsome tortoiseshell cat, stretched at her fullest length upon the hearth. "What a meek, cosy face she has; a placid, quiet sort of grandmother look—may all grandmothers forgive me! Then, to see her lap milk, why you 'd think a drop of blood of any sort would poison her. The wretch! 'twas only last week, she killed and ate one of my doves, and afterwards sat wiping her whiskers with her left paw, as comfortably as any dowager at a tea-party. I nursed her before she had any eyes to look at her benefactor, and she has sat and purred upon my knee, as though she knew all she owed me, and was trying to pay the debt with her best singing. And for all this, look here—this is what she did only yesterday," and Capstick showed three long fine scratches on his right hand.

"That's nothing," said Mr. Kingcup. "You know that cats will scratch."

"To be sure I do," replied Capstick; "and all the world knows it; but the world don't think the worse of 'em for it, and for this reason; they can, when they like, so well hide their claws. Now, poor little Velvet here—poor vermin martyr!—he can't disguise what he has; and so he's hunted and worried for being, as I may say, plain-spoken; when puss is petted and may sleep all day long at the fire because in faith she's so glossy, and looks so innocent. And all the while, has she not murderous teeth and talons?"

"And so I hope," cried Kingcup, "ends your sermon on hedgehogs. Let us talk of more serious matters."

"Ay, if properly thought of, you can find them," said Capstick. "For my part, little Velvet here carries a text for serious matter, as you have it, in every prickle. Look at him."

But the philosopher was interrupted in his theme by a knock at the door, which, ere an invitation to enter could be delivered, was opened, and Mr. Tangle, Mr. Folder, and three of the inhabitants of Liquorish—voters for that immaculate borough—crowded themselves into the small apartment. Mr. Capstick rose in his best dignity. He seemed suddenly to divine the cause of the abrupt visit, and prepared himself to meet it accordingly. Bright Jem stared perplexedly in the face of Tangle, as though picking out an old acquaintance from his features; whilst St Giles shrank unseen into a corner, not caring to confront the lawyer and agent.

"Mr. Capstick, good morning, sir. We knew your early habits—nothing like them, sir, as your face declares—and therefore, we were up I may say by cock-crow, to do ourselves the honour of calling upon you." Thus spoke Tangle.

"We also know, Mr. Capstick, your attachment to our blessed con—con—" but here Mr. Folder was seized with an obstinate cough. He, nevertheless, whilst fighting against it, motioned with his right hand, as much as to say, you understand perfectly well what I mean.

"And we likewise know'd," observed an independent freeholder, name unknown, "how you hates the yellow party."

"His lordship, Mr. Capstick, will personally do himself the great delight of waiting upon you. In the meantime, I, his humble friend, Mr. Tangle, of Red Lion Square—"

Here Capstick, looking dead in the face of the lawyer, gave a long, loud whistle. He then said, in a low voice of suppressed astonishment,—"And so it is! Bless my soul! Well, no doubt, Providence is very good. Still who 'd have thought you 'd have lasted to this time?"

Here Tangle seized the hand of Capstick, who suffered his palm to lay like a dead fish in the hand of that very fervent man. "Surely—yes, it must be—surely we have met before? Where could it have been?"

"Newgate," answered Capstick, as though proud of the place. This frankness, however, somewhat puzzled the criminal lawyer. He knew not what the amount of Capstick's obligations might be to him; could not, on the instant, recollect whether the tenant of the Tub, the freeholder of Liquorish, had been a housebreaker, a highwayman, or simple pickpocket. Mr. Tangle's personal acquaintanceship with so many men, thus variously inclined, had been so great, it was impossible for him to recollect the benefits, that, for certain inconsiderable fees, he had from time to time conferred. Thus, in his uncertainty, he merely said, "Bless me! Newgate!" smiling blandly, as though he spoke of Araby the Happy, or the Fortunate Isles.

"Certainly, Newgate," repeated Capstick. "I wonder you should forget the case."

"Why, the fact is, Mr. Capstick, I have a sort of dim recollection that—but the truth is, when I leave London, I always like to leave Newgate behind me. Whatever our small affair was—"

"Nothing but a little matter of horse stealing," said Capstick, with an ingenuousness that even astonished Tangle, whilst Mr. Folder and the three inhabitants of Liquorish looked very blank indeed. It was but for a moment, for they sank the horse-stealer, as they deemed Capstick, in the freeholder, and smiled as vigorously as before.

"Now, I recollect very well," said Tangle, "perfectly well. It was a case of conspiracy against you. I remember, Mr. Capstick, the affecting compliment the Judge paid you when you quitted the dock—the cheers that rang through the court—and the very handsome supper we had on the night of your acquittal. It was a black case, sir; a very black case. Nevertheless, it is a sweet satisfaction to recollect that we indicted the witnesses, and that one of 'em, proved guilty of perjury, was nearly killed in the pillory. I felt the case so strongly, that I remember it—ay, as though it was but yesterday—I remember that I gave my clerks a holiday to see the fellow punished, telling them at the same time that they might do as they liked."

"Humph!" said Capstick, "you don't keep your memory in quite as good order as the Newgate Calendar. There was no acquittal in the case I talk of; none at all. Sentence was passed, and execution ordered."

Tangle looked silently but intently in the face of Capstick,

as though mentally inquiring, "which horse-stealer he could be?"

"Execution ordered,"—repeated Capstick—"but it wasn't to be. Instead of hanging, there was transportation for life."

"And so there was—I recollect perfectly well. I am always glad to welcome back an erring man to the paths of virtue," said Tangle. "Of course you have obtained your pardon?"

"Pardon! Oh dear no—not at all," said Capstick.

"Why—bless me!"—gasped Mr. Folder—"you don't mean to say, fellow—you hav'n't the effrontery to declare it to the faces of honest men, that you are an escaped transport?"

Capstick made no answer, but smiled resignedly. The inference, however, was too much for bright Jem, who cried out—"Why, in course not; and as for talking about honest faces, I should think them as couldn't see the honestest that *is*, here"—and Jem laid his hand affectionately on Capstick's shoulder—"ought to put on their spectacles."

"Be quiet, Jem," said Capstick, mildly.

"I can't; it would make that dumb cretur speak if it could," said Jem, pointing to the pet hedgehog, "to hear sich rubbish. You ought to recollect, Mr. Tangle, all about it: for wasn't you well paid for doin' next-door to nothin'? The bright guineas Mr. Capstick give you to take the part o' that poor little child—and ater all, didn't you leave him to be hanged like a dog!"

Tangle's face broke into excessive radiance. "Bless my heart—bless my heart!" he cried, and was again about to seize the hand of Capstick, when the cynic suddenly lifted the hedgehog from the table, giving a marked preference to that object. Mr. Tangle was of a too generous nature to be offended by such partiality—he had too much true humility. Therefore, in no way confused, he turned to Mr. Folder, saying—"I think, sir, if there were any doubt of our cause, this would be a good omen for it." Mr. Folder smiled and assented, though in evident ignorance of Tangle's meaning. "To think that the first man we should have canvassed, should have been this good—I will say it—this righteous person! You recollect Mr. Capstick; of course, you recollect Mr. Capstick?"

Mr. Folder, feeling, from the lawyer's manner, that he ought to recollect our muffin-maker, shuffled forward, and with all alacrity prepared to take his hand: but the misanthrope, leering at that affable old man, continued to pat his hedgehog.

"You remember the case of that wretched boy," said Tangle, "that born bad thing, young St. Giles, who stole his lordship's pony?" Mr. Folder was immediately impressed—we might say

oppressed—with a remembrance of the case. "And of course, you remember the benevolence of this excellent man, who"—

"Tol de rol lol, tol lol lol lol," sang Capstick, with his best energy.

"But he 's a true Christian, and you perceive will hear nothing about it," said Tangle. "I 'll say no more, sir; you have your reward—there, sir, there"—and Tangle pointed his forefinger towards that part of Capstick's anatomy where in men, as he had heard, resided the heart. "Nevertheless, sir, for that young St. Giles—hallo! my friend," cried Tangle, for the first time observing the owner of that name, who, agitated by what he had heard, and further terrified by the sudden recognition of Tangle, was pale and trembling—"hallo! what brought you here?"

"Do you know the young man?" asked Capstick.

"Know him, sir! I should think I did. He 's one of our men, hired to shout for us," said Tangle.

"To fight for us, too," added Mr. Folder, "if need be, in defence of our blessed constitution."

"Well, friend," said Capstick to St. Giles, "your clothes are dry, and I hope your belly 's full. That way to the right leads to the Rose."

Capstick's manner told St. Giles to be gone. It was no time for explanation; therefore, determining to return in the evening to the hermitage, and make himself known to his benefactor, St. Giles moved towards the door. "God bless you, sir," he said "for all the good you 've done to me." With these words he crossed the threshold, and was in a moment out of sight.

"What," cried Tangle, struck by the blessing of St. Giles upon Capstick, "what, sir, at your old kindness again?"

"There was no kindness at all in the matter," said Jem; "he was spilt in a pond, and come here with a wet skin."

"Oh, I see! The accident that happened to the band. Poor devils!" cried Tangle, "'twas a mercy none of them were drowned, for the time 's getting close, and, Mr. Capstick, you who know life, know that an election without music, why it 's like a contest without—"

"Money," added Capstick, with a grim smile.

"Exactly so. But I perceive in the hospitality you have vouchsafed to his lordship's servant, your devotion to his cause. Ha, sir! England has need of such men, now. A few such as he would put us to rights, sir, in no time; for all the times want, sir, is the strong arm—nothing like the strong arm. However, to the immediate purpose of our visit; as I say, his lordship will himself call upon you. In the meantime"—and Tangle's face looked like old

parchment in the sun—"in the meantime, I trust we may count upon your vote and interest?"

Capstick cast his eyes upon the ground, then upwards, as though suddenly rapt by calculation. He then asked, "Is his lordship fond of hedgehogs?"

"I had the happiness and the honour," piped Folder, "of opening his youthful mind; and knowing, as I do, how attentively he was wont to listen to my exhortations of not only considering the wants of the lower orders, but of especially feeling consideration towards the lower animal kingdom, I think I can confidently say—though I never heard his lordship declare his preference—that he is decidedly fond of hedgehogs."

"I am very happy to hear it," said Capstick, "'tis a great thing to know."

"You don't feel disposed—should his lordship take a fancy to the creature—to sell that hedgehog?" asked Tangle.

"How could I refuse his lordship anything?" answered Capstick. "It 's an odd thing: but you 've heard of what they call the transmigration of souls?"

"Of course," answered the scholar, Folder.

"Well, then, it 's droll enough; and I never thought it. But until the election is over, I feel that my soul is in this hedgehog."

Tangle put his forefinger to his nose, and said—"Good! I understand you. A man of the world, Mr. Capstick—a man who knows life." Whereupon Tangle, ere Capstick was aware of it, caught him by the hand, squeezing it until its knuckles cracked again. "God bless you! We may depend upon all your interest? Good bye."

The canvassing party then quitted the cottage. Mr. Tangle walked on with Mr. Folder; and was no sooner in the lane that led to the main road, where they had left their chaise, than he indulged his pent-up wrath with the freest explosion. "Now, sir, that 's one of the scoundrels that make the world what it is!"

"Shocking!" said Mr. Folder.

"That 's one of the men who pollute the pure source of parliamentary representation."

"It 's dreadful," remarked Folder.

"Without such vagabonds, a seat in the house would be cheap enough. But isn't it dreadful to think what a gentleman must disburse to buy such scum!"

"Notwithstanding," urged Mr. Folder, "we must protect our blessed constitution. And if the other party will offer money for the commodity, we mustn't stop at any price to outbid 'em!"

"I know that, Mr. Folder; I know what is due to our true interests. And the noble house of St. James has not forgotten that. The box of gold at the Olive Branch will testify to the patriotism of that house. Nevertheless, as a Christian it shocks me—as a Christian, I say—but here 's the coach. Fellow, drive back to the Olive Branch." Whereupon the canvassing party returned to their head-quarters of the pure and independent borough.

CHAPTER XX.

As yet the noble candidate of the house of St. James had not presented himself to the voters of Liquorish. To say the truth, his lordship had not that reverence for those small pegs of the glorious machine of the constitution—the freeholders—that, in his virgin address to his constituency, he deemed it only decent to assume. Perhaps, indeed, he thought the said machine might do all the better without them. But this heresy had been so deeply cut into the bark of his youthful mind, that it grew and enlarged with it. He had been taught to look upon a voter of Liquorish as a sort of two-legged hound, the property of his noble house; no less its goods, because the creature did not wear a collar round his neck. No: fortunately, men are so made, that though seeming free, their souls may now and then be made fast to an owner, who can buy the manacles at the Mint: wonderful chains; invisible to the world; of finer temper than any hammered at fairy smithies. It was this good, wholesome prejudice—as Mr. Folder called it—that imparted to young St. James the serenest sense of security: the voters of Liquorish were the live stock of his house: their souls stamped, like the Marquess's sheep, with his own noble mark. Hence, our youthful lord had delayed until the latest moment the drudgery of personal canvass. Hence, had he postponed the practical waggery of soliciting a vote where no vote could be refused. Nevertheless, guided by the patriotic experience of his noble father, he would present himself to the people. The time, the place, had been selected with the happiest sense of propriety. Young St. James, the guest of Doctor Gilead—the humble, zealous college-friend of the Marquess—would meekly exhibit himself in the doctor's pew at the parish church: the doctor himself, on that eventful occasion, preaching an appropriate discourse. Doubtless, the doctor felt that oracles to be respected must

be vocal only at long intervals; hence, Doctor Gilead preached but rarely to his simple flock. His youthful curate—a spiritual shepherd boy—was all-sufficient to lead them to the water-courses and the pasture: it was only now and then that the elder pastor would shake before them a mouthful or so of sweet herbs, culled from the dainty garden of his own theology. Doctor Gilead was a learned man; a pious man. Neither his coachman, his butler nor either of his three footmen, doubted his wisdom or his orthodoxy. He was a man, too, of practical patience. Thrice had he expected a bishopric; and thrice had the mitre vanished from the tips of his fingers. Whereupon, he meekly folded his hands, and smiling down the gout that each time with burning nippers seized upon him, he thanked heaven for his felicitous escape. Excellent man! He could no more hide the humility raging within him, than he could have disguised the small-pox. It would break out. He had once preached before George the Third; and then from his pulpit, as from the Mountain, did he see the Land of Promise, the House of Lords. Still, the milk and honey were untasted; and still, with patient, smiling lips, he praised the providence that would have it so.

Such was the owner of Lazarus Hall, the rectory; an abode especially prepared for the reception of young St. James, who, two nights at least, would bless the roof-tree of his father's humble friend. The house was rich and odorous as nest of phœnix. Yet was there no golden display; no velvet hangings; no flaunting tapestries; but luxury in every shape, took the guise of simplicity, and made every corner of the house a cosy nook for swan-down Christianity. Then everything was so radiantly clean, it seemed no part of this dusty earth, but fresh from some brighter planet. Had Doctor Gilead been arrayed from head to heel in episcopal lawn, there was nought within the Hall of Lazarus to smudge it. The very flies, from habit, would have respected it. Saints and hermits would not have dared to sit upon the chair-covers.

It was Saturday, about five in the afternoon. Doctor Gilead sat in his library, garnished about with his wife and three daughters. The doctor was black and glossy as a newly-bathed raven. As for the ladies, they might have been taken as specimens of Brobdignag china: so creamy and motionless were their faces, so prim and well-defined their flowing gowns. Not a word was said; not a sound was heard, save that the doctor's watch ticked feverishly in his fob, and a big, blundering blue fly kept bouncing and battering its head against a window-pane, doubtless puzzled to know why, with all so very clear before it, it could not get out. And now the doctor looked reproachfully at the noisy insect; and now subsided to his customary meekness. Once or twice, he strangled a sigh at his

very lips. Haply—but who shall sound the depths of man's silent soul?—haply he thought of the turbot macerating in the kettle, haply of the haunch scorching on the spit. Say what we will, it tries the spirit of man, to think serenely of his boiled and roast, and of the late-coming guest perilling them both. Doctor Gilead breathed heavily; then, taking his watch from his fob, he said with a smile of ghastly resignation, "It 's getting rather late."

And what said the doctor's wife? Why precisely what every married daughter of Eve would say. She, in the naturalest manner, observed—"I shouldn't wonder if he doesn't come at all." The daughters—meek things!—said nothing; but they looked down and about them at their pretty gowns, and slightly bit their lips, and slightly sighed.

"I don't think, my dear," said Mrs. Gilead, "it 's any use waiting for his lordship, now. Hadn't they better serve the dinner!"

Now, had the doctor assented to this, Mrs. Gilead would have been pathetically eloquent on the inhospitality of the measure. She had no such meaning; all she wanted was the discourse of her husband. She talked to make him talk. In the like way that, when a pump is dry, men pour water into it to set it flowing. "The dinner will be totally spoilt, my dear," added Mrs. Gilead, smiling as though she communicated sweetest intelligence. The doctor spoke not, but suffered an abdominal shudder. "In fact, my dear," continued the wife, "now, we ought rather to hope that his lordship will not come. There will be nothing fit to set before him—nothing whatever." It was strange—she did not mean it—yet did Mrs. Gilead talk with a certain gust, as though she talked of a special treat: to have nothing fit for his lordship seemed to be the very thing desirable. "What did you say, my dear?" asked Mrs. Gilead.

The doctor had not uttered a syllable. However, again he looked at his watch, and then said, "It is very late." We can find no other parallel to this heroic calmness save in the life of St. Lawrence; who when turned, like a half-done steak, upon his gridiron, merely observed to an acquaintance who chanced to be near,—"It is very warm." In both cases, cooking was the source of pain, and the test of resignation: for Dr. Gilead thought of his haunch as if it had been a part of him. And still the doctor sat, looking fiercely patient. Mrs. Gilead, the partner of his bosom, knew well what that bosom felt, and therefore in her own feminine way remarked, "Now I certainly give his lordship up."

It was a great pity that Mrs. Gilead had not spoken thus before or surely the same effect would have followed the syllables. For

no sooner had she uttered them than there was a whirl of wheels, and suddenly a carriage in a cloud of dust stopt at Lazarus Hall. Mrs. Gilead jumped; her daughters gave a sharp, short, joyful scream; whilst the doctor himself—but, reader, did you ever in broad day mark the night-lamp of man-midwife? It is dully, darkly red. The sun sinks, night comes; and that dark glass burns like a ruby, liquid with glowing light. Such was Doctor Gilead's countenance; such the change; now sulky coloured, and now flaming with joy. A moment, and he was at the carriage-door; another, and young St. James—the son of his patron and friend—stood, with both hands seized by the grasping, throbbing palms of the affectionate doctor. The doctor was in spasms of delight: Mrs. Gilead, full of smiles, opened and folded her face like a fan: and the young ladies, before so statue-like, that had they sat in the open air, the birds had perched upon them, swam about and arched their necks like cygnets, taking a May-morning bath. And now we jump the dinner-talk, sparkling and brilliant, as a mountebank jumps through fireworks, and shift the scene.

We leave the whole household to their dreams. Let Doctor Gilead think himself a bishop; let him in his slumbers rehearse his first parliamentary speech—let his wife dream of her gown for court—let each of the young ladies see and feel herself a blushing, stammering bride at church—let St. James dream,—he cannot help it—of poor Clarissa. It is Saturday night. Labour has flung down his working tools, and sleeps a deep and happy sleep; for the next day is a holy breathing-time—a day of rest—Sunday.

It may be remembered that the band and minor mercenaries of St. James were posted at the Rose, a hostelry of modest character compared to the dignified pretensions of the Olive Branch, made still more important by the judgment of Mr. Tangle, who had selected that tavern as the head-quarters of the noble candidate. The Rose, in the agent's own words, did very well for the rabble always necessary on such occasions; but for himself, he could not at all feel himself a gentleman in any meaner place than the Olive Branch. Indeed, now and then he was compelled to remember the national and patriotic importance of the cause in which he was engaged, to reconcile him heartily to the inconvenience of even that abiding-place. "There was no real life off the stones of London; but then the condition of the country demanded some sacrifice of every man: why, then, should he complain? No: he would stick to the constitution whilst a plank of it held together. If the ship—he meant the constitution—was doomed to go down, why, he would give three cheers, and go down with it."

It was Sunday morning, and breakfast being over, the two patriots—full of meat and drink and the good of their country—sank back in their chairs, and looked serenely in each other's face.

"We shall have a fine congregation to-day; all the fashion and respectability of the neighbourhood, no doubt?"

"They can't do less," remarked Mr. Tangle, "'twill be only a proper compliment to his lordship."

"Nevertheless," observed the ancient tutor, speaking slowly, gravely, "I am a little disappointed. I did think that on his lordship's arrival, they would at least have rung the church bells. Nor was there even a bonfire."

"Pardon me; I have my scruples: all men have, or should have. Touching the church bells, I must confess I do not think they ought ever to be employed in any uses that are secular. I have my prejudices," continued Tangle, with the air of a man very proud of the commodity, "and church bells are one. Bonfires are altogether another matter."

"And fireworks," added Folder.

"And fireworks," assented Tangle. "Though I said nothing at the time, I must own with you, that the absence of so small a mark of respect as a bonfire on the arrival of his lordship, speaks very many volumes against the people. A few years ago, and there 'd been a blaze on every hill. Not a schoolboy but would have had his cap and pockets stuffed with crackers. Now, painful as it is to a man who loves the constitution, still the truth cannot be disguised, there was not a single squib—not a single squib," and Tangle repeated the words with pathetic emphasis.

"I heard none," said Mr. Folder, with the air of a man who, nevertheless, forlornly hopes that he may be mistaken.

"Oh no! We must not deceive ourselves. We must look the truth full in the face, ugly as the truth may be; it 's the only way to browbeat it. I learnt that maxim, Mr. Folder, from practice in the courts of law. There, it only wants a brassy look and a big voice, to make an ugly-looking truth seem a shameful impostor. Nothing, sir, like learning to boldly face truth, if you want to get the best of it. And so, sir, though the omission of the bonfires and the fireworks did pain me—how could it be otherwise?—nevertheless, I feel all the stronger in our cause for knowing the revolutionary principles that, as I have more than once observed, are now arrayed against all that is great and titled in the country!"

"Don't you think, Mr. Tangle," said Folder, "that we had better visit our toilets, to be ready for church? We can then walk gently over the fields."

"Walk!" echoed Tangle, looking glumly.

"Certainly. On the present occasion, it will look better to the people; more condescending; more like themselves. His lordship, depend upon it, will not ride to-day. No: I think my principles will bear a little better fruit;" and Folder smiled securely.

"Of course not: I had forgotten: to be sure not;" answered Tangle. "Undoubtedly, we walk—undoubtedly."

This point resolved, the gentlemen retired to their adjoining chambers to attire themselves for their devotions. The village church on a high hill, its base girted with magnificent trees, was seen from either window; a simple, rustic, snow-white building shining in the sun, and standing clearly, purely out from the deep blue summer heaven. "A charming view, this," said Tangle as, having arrayed himself, he was about to quit the room, when his companion appeared in the passage.

"A beautiful landscape!" said Folder, entering the chamber. "I was thinking so, as I looked from my own window. How very nicely the church there shows itself upon the hill!"

"Quite right—nothing but proper;" observed Tangle, with a sudden touch of solemnity. I'd have every church upon a hill; I would, indeed, sir. And for this reason; when upon a hill, everybody can see it. When upon a hill, it seems to stand like a monitor, an adviser to every body. It preaches, as I may say, from a high pulpit to the world below; and so, you will perceive, it's apt to make men pause in their sinful, shabby courses. Many a time—I don't mind confessing so much to you, Mr. Folder—but many a time, that is, sometimes, when I've felt my soul a little slack, for the best of us can't always be braced up like drums—well, when, as I say, I've been a little slack, the very sight of a church has pulled me up again, and made me think of virtue just as I did before."

"Nobody can dispute it," remarked Mr. Folder. "A church, as somebody has observed, is sermons in stones."

"My opinion to a letter," observed Tangle; "though it's odd that anybody should have thought the same as myself. Come along. Stay. When I come here, I always look once to see if all be right." Whereupon Mr. Tangle approached a closet, unlocked the door, and pointing to an iron-bound box, observed—"All's safe. All new, Mr. Folder, all sparkling and burning from the Mint. What a beautiful substance gold is only to look at," cried Tangle with enthusiasm; at the same moment, unlocking the box and lifting the lid. "There's a blaze!" he cried, with a voluptuous smacking of the mouth. "How they twinkle!" he added: whereupon the parliamentary agent clutched a handful of bright guineas, and poured them from hand to hand, his eye

catching yellow lustre from the golden shower. And thus for some brief minute or two did Tangle play with minted gold.

We are told that the snake-charmers of the East are wont to ensnare the reptiles with dulcet music. The snake Apollo plays a melody upon some magic pipe; whereupon torpid snakes coiled in holes and crannies gradually untwist themselves, and feel their blood quicken, and their scales rustle, and they glide and undulate towards the sound,—readily as school-girls run to a ball. Great is the voice of gold! What a range, too, it has! Now, breathing the profoundest notes of persuasion—deep and earnest as a hermit's homily—and now, carrying away the heart and senses with its light and laughing trills,—delicious, fascinating as the voice of bacchante. Gold, too, is the earth's great ventriloquist; speaking from and to the belly of immortal man, and enslaving and juggling him with its many voices.

And gold worked its vocal wonders in Tangle's bed-chamber. For no sooner did it sound, than like the pipe of the charmer, it drew forth a little human reptile—a gutter-snake—a noxious creature, hatched in a London lane to sting the world. Ay, it was even so. No sooner, we say, did Tangle rattle the gold, than a little ragged head was thrust from beneath the bed's foot; a head, with eyes bright and snake-like; sparkling the more, the more the metal chinked. That little head—what a world of wicked knowledge was packed within it!—was the property of St. Giles's half-brother, and it was said, of Tom Blast's whole son, young Jingo, the hero of the pocket-handkerchief; the petted genius of Hog-Lane. How that adroit youngling had gained the eminence of Tangle's bed-chamber, we will not pause to explain! Of that in due season.

Our whole business is for the present with Tangle and his companion. As the old war-horse pricks his ears at the murderous music of the trumpet—as some retired and erewhile sharp attorney, reading some successful juggle juggled in the name of justice, feels his heart trickle as it ran red ink, and dreams himself again in court—so did the sound of the gold, as it fell from hand to hand, awaken in the soul of Tangle all its metallic strength. Nay, his soul for a moment left him, and ducked and dived and took its fill of liquid pleasure in that golden river—that Pactolus embanked in a box — like Triton wallowing in the foamy sea. He felt he was in his true element; and eloquence flowed from his lips, free as a silver thread of rivulet from some old granite-hearted rock.

"Wonderful invention, gold coin, sir! Wonderful thing! If there 's anything, sir, that shows man to be the creature that he is,—it 's this. Scholars, when they want to raise man above the

monkey—heaven forgive the atheists—call him a laughing animal, a tool-making animal, a cooking animal. Sir, they 've all missed the true description ; they should call him a coining animal. I 've thought of the matter much, Mr. Folder ; and this "—and Tangle rattled the coin—" this is the true weapon against the atheists, sir—and nearly all scholars are every bit the same as atheists—just as toadstools are very near to mushrooms. No, sir, no ; they may call men what they like,—but I see proofs of the immortality of the soul in this, sir. No unbelief—I 'm sure of it, Mr. Folder—no unbelief can stand against this," and Tangle again laid his hand upon the gold.

"The theory is ingenious—perhaps true," said Folder.

"A glorious invention, coining, sir," again cried Tangle, expanding with his subject. "Now, look here ; these guineas are, I may say, nothing more than the representatives of the voters of Liquorish. Here we have 'em ! Here I take 'em up with my hand, any number of 'em, body and soul." Whereupon, Tangle scooped up the guineas in his palm and poured them down again, young Jingo still looking from beneath the bed, and grinning, and twitching his lips as the music continued. "Here they are—men, women, and children—all packed close ; all snug. Sir, a man who carries these, carries heaps of his fellow-creatures with him. A tremendous art, sir, coining. They talk about the invention of printing : why, what was coining but printing,—that is, the better part of printing ; the soul, I may say of it, without its wickedness ? There' s no dangerous notions in these, sir ; no false ideas ; no stuff to dizzy the heads of fools ; making them think themselves as good as their betters ; no treason, sir ; but all plain and above board—plain and above board." And again, Tangle took up the coin, and dropt it—and took it up, and dropt it again, his heart-strings vibrating to the music.

And the church bell rang out its summons to the world. And, for some moments, the eloquent man heard it not ; he only listened to his church bells—the ringing that sounded of his heaven. Still he plays with the gold : still the church bell sounds.

Toll—toll—chink—chink—toll—chink—toll—chink !

"Is not that the church bell ?" at length asked Mr. Folder.

"Bless me ! so it is. I 'd forgotten—nothing secular to-day ;" and Tangle closed the box ; locked it : closed the closet-door ; locked it too. "Stop a minute," he observed. He then went to his trunk, and took therefrom a large prayer-book, bound in morocco, scarlet as blood, and daubed with gold. "Never travel, Mr. Folder, without this," said Tangle, dropping his eyelids, and tenderly pressing the book with his fingers,—"never sir. Now

if you please." Folder stept from the room, and Tangle vigorously locked the door; tried it once, twice, and putting the key in his pocket, descended the stairs.

It was a lovely day; there seemed a Sabbath peace on all things. The drudged horse stood meek and passive in the field, patiently eyeing the passer-by, as though it felt secure of one day's holiday; the cows, with their large, kind looks, lay unmoved upon the grass; all things seemed taking rest beneath the brooding wings of heaven.

We have climbed the hill—have gained the churchyard; the dust of the living dust of generations. The bell is swinging still; and turning on every side, from distant hamlets we see men, women, and children—age with its staff, and babyhood warm at the breast—all coming upward—upward—to the church. Still they climb, and still from twenty opposite paths they come, to strengthen and rejoice their souls in one common centre. By bigotry's good leave, a fore-shadowing of that tremendous Sabbath of the universe when all men from all paths shall meet in Paradise.

Long ere the bell had ceased to summon the congregation, the church was filled. There were, however, two causes for this Christian alacrity; although, it is our belief that few even to themselves acknowledged either. Nevertheless, it was plain from the eager, half-anxious looks of the people, that they expected something beyond the usual Sabbath comforting: that they had come to see some interesting novelty, as well as to hear the customary promise of good tidings. Suddenly the rustic beadle—he has but little external glory to mark his function—gives a short significant cough, and hurries towards the door. All heads turn with him, and in a few moments, there is a low murmur, a hushing sound of surprise and satisfaction, as the handsome candidate, the young Lord St. James, with Mrs. Gilead and her two daughters, enter the church, and ushered by the beadle, glide to the family pew.

The church, we say, was thronged. A beautiful sight, doubtless, to behold in that small village temple, men of all conditions gathered together to confess their common infirmities, to supplicate for common blessings: to appear for a time, as in the vestibule of eternity, in common adoration of the Eternal; all distinctions and disguises of earth cast aside, and all in nakedness of soul bending before God. A beautiful sight! And yet, the devil pride will follow some folks to church, to play unsightly pranks even before the altar. He will not be left at the church door, even for a poor two hours: but with hypocritical demureness moves up the aisle, and enters a pew, all the better to mutter deep devotion. Look down the middle aisle. It is filled with the common people—with

God's commonest earth: farming men, labourers, artisans: the drudges of the world, who are nevertheless told by the good man in the pulpit that they have, every one within them, an immortal angel. They are assured that all wealth is vanity: they are passionately desired to look upon pride and arrogance as deadly sins; and with these lovely precepts touching their heart-strings, they look on each side and see ladies and gentleman—called by the clergyman their fellow-creatures—shut up in pews, set apart in closets; as, though in the presence of their Maker, and whilst denouncing themselves miserable sinners, they would vindicate their right of money, and buy of heaven itself the privilege of first consideration. Poverty and humbleness of station may sit upon the middle benches: but wealth and what is mouthed for respectability must have cribs apart for themselves: must be considered Christian jewels to be kept in velvet boxes; lest they should catch the disease of lowliness by contact with the vulgar. Surely there are other masquerades than masquerades in halls and play-houses. For are there not Sabbath maskings, with naked faces for masks? How many a man has himself rolled to church, as though, like Elijah, he would go even to heaven in a carriage?

The church was full. Faces, familiar to the reader, were there. Capstick and Bright Jem sat on the middle benches; whilst St. Giles, at the extreme end of the church, fixed in a corner, had anxiously watched for the appearance of St. James; and when he again beheld him, appeared to give fervent thanks for the blessing. Mr. Kingcup with about twenty red-faced little boys,—Kingcup, be it known, was a schoolmaster—sat in the gallery. Mr. Tangle and Mr. Folder were, of course, provided with comfortable seats in a most comfortable pew.

Doctor Gilead preached the sermon. Possibly the doctor himself was ignorant of the bias, nevertheless he was a party parson. Hence—he could not help it—he selected a text from which he evolved the social necessity of the many trusting the few. We may not transcribe to our profane page the sacred text and solemn discourse delivered on the occasion. All we may do, is to assure the reader that the excellent doctor preached with his best earnestness. Again he bade his hearers live in the days of the patriarchs; again he conjured them to put away conceit, and faith in their own weak judgments, and disobedience to their betters happily appointed to guide and protect them. (Here—all unconsciously—the doctor turned towards St. James's pew, and looked benignly down upon his lordship.) It was plain that the doctor thought himself a shepherd of the patriarchal times; and it was no less plain that he thought all his hearers merely sheep. He made a deep impression upon many. At least two old dames—farmers'

wives in red cloaks—wept; whilst half a dozen grey heads were seen to nod approvingly. Capstick, it was evident, had a cold; hence, twice he coughed so loudly, that both the beadle and Bright Jem looked anxiously at him, whilst two or three others seemed to say, "people with such a cold should not come to church."

It was, in sooth, no wonder that Doctor Gilead melted his hearers. His words were so soft, so flowing; they fell like summer honey-dew. Then his aspect was so calm—so very comfortable. He had the cure of, we know not how many thousand souls. He had souls in Oxfordshire—souls in Norfolk—souls in Middlesex—nay, souls in at least half-a-dozen counties: good Mother Church had so bountifully endowed her pet son; and yet there was not a wrinkle in his cheek to tell the anxiety of so tremendous a responsibility. Had the thousands of souls been so many thousand chickens, Doctor Gilead could not have looked more self-complacent under his charge.

But the service is over. The small organ peals its farewell notes. The organ, be it known, given by the house of St. James for a political purpose; thus adroitly blending the music of party with the music of religion. What a world's harmony!

CHAPTER XXI.

"He 's grown a fine young man," said Bright Jem, whose talk was of St. James.

"Why, he 's tall enough for a member of Parliament," said Mr. Capstick.

"He 's a good un, too, I know it," said Jem. "I 'm sure, if he didn't look as meek and as humble, and wasn't as attentive to the discourse! And it was a nice sermon, wasn't it? Perhaps a little too much o' putting people over people's heads; but still it was comfortable; though now and then to be sure, the doctor did, as I think, take a little too much upon himself. How he did give it to 'em who he said were out of the palings of the Church! How he did dress 'em to be sure! And how, upon his own authority, he said they 'd suffer."

"James," said Capstick—for so he dignified Jem when wishing to be solemn—"James, do you recollect the words, 'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness?'"

"I should think I did," said Jem, unconsciously pulling off his hat

"Ha! that's beautiful and consoling, isn't it? And what a fine creature is Man, so long as he always has these words before his eyes, and so tries to do nothing but what shall be some way worthy of his likeness! To do this, James, is to make this world a pleasant place—and to have everybody happy about us. 'And God said, Let us make man in our image!' This is beautiful: but it's sad, it's melancholy work, Jem, when Man says, 'Let us make God in *our* image!'"

"I beg your pardon," said Jem, "it's utterly unpossible. 'Tisn't to be done, no how."

"Jem, it's been done for thousands of years; it's being done every day." Jem stared. "Yes, Jem; for when man, in spiritual matters, persecutes man—when in the name of religion, and as he says, vindicating God, he commits violence and cruelty upon his fellow-creatures, then does he in his own ignorance make for a time his Maker after his own erring and revengeful nature—then does he make God in his own image! Look at the burnings and roastings of poor human flesh—its hangings and quarterings, its imprisonment and exile in the name of religion. What are all these, but that man does all this wickedness in the name of God; that is, he thinks God is pleased with what pleases his own vile, vindictive nature; and as I take it—and it can't be denied—after such fashion it is, that man makes God after his own image. Many folks—poor souls—think this the best religion. Jem, it's nothing more nor less than worst blasphemy."

Saying this, Mr. Capstick rose from the grave-stone, whereupon in summer time he was wont to sit for half-an-hour or so after the service, talking with his old companion and enjoying the lovely prospect below and around him. "Now, Jem, to dinner;" and Capstick was proceeding in laudable pursuit of that object of man's daily cares, when he paused and pointed towards St. Giles, who was loitering in the churchyard. "Jem, isn't that our wet friend?"

"In course it is," said Jem. "Didn't you see him in the church? There's a strangeness about him, but for all that I don't know that I don't like him."

"I don't know that I do," said the misanthrope. "But it's plain that he's been dodging hereabout after us." With this, Capstick advanced towards St. Giles. "Glad to see you here," he said. "Reading the tombstones, eh? Ha! they're books that now and then we all ought to read, seeing that one day we shall all have our names in 'em."

"All as can afford 'em," said Jem, with a literalness that sometimes tried the temper of his patron.

"I don't care for stones," answered Capstick. "Show me a bit

of green turf; why, sometimes I can fancy written in the grass as nice an epitaph as was ever chipped by stone-cutter."

"I wanted, sir, to see you," said St. Giles to Capstick. "I left you in a manner so sudden. I wanted to say something."

"Speak out," cried Capstick. "A man can't speak the truth —whether it be sweet or sour—in a better place."

Still St. Giles hesitated. Looking full at Capstick, at length he asked with an earnest voice,—"And you don't know me, sir?" Capstick, after a full stare, shook his head. "You ought, sir; indeed, you ought; for you did me a deal of good. I've a secret about me, that if known would hang me: but I 'm safe in telling you."

"I don't know that," said Capstick. "I wouldn't answer for myself at all. It might be my duty to hang you: as an honest and respectable man, as the world goes, I might consider it a praiseworthy thing to strangle you. Mind what you 're about," cried the misanthrope, moving gradually away.—"I 'm rather given to hanging; I am indeed, young man."

"I 'd trust a thousand lives with you, sir," said St. Giles, approaching him. "And so, sir, you must know"—

"Well? What?" cried Capstick, alarmed at the terrible news about to be revealed. "I shall hang you; but if you will, speak—speak."

St. Giles looked round; then suddenly, as though death-struck, turned ghastly pale. He stammered out—"Not now, sir; another time," and walked swiftly from the churchyard.

"Jem," said Capstick, "we shall hear of burglary, perhaps murder, before to-morrow. That's a desperate fellow, Jem."

"Not a bit on it," answered Jem. "Poor soul! he looks as if he was deeper in trouble than in wickedness." In truth, this was Capstick's own opinion, albeit he chose not so to deliver it. He had to keep up a character for suspicion and misanthropy, and therefore would see, as he called them, hanging lines in every other human countenance.

However, leaving the pair to pursue their way to the Tub, we may at once narrate to the reader the cause that startled St. Giles from his purpose, making him slink "like a guilty thing away." When, in a preceding chapter, St. Giles quitted Hog Lane, he was, it may be remembered, followed to the burial-ground by his half-brother. It was the hope of St. Giles that he had taken final leave of his old destroyer, Tom Blast. However, that master of iniquity would not have it so. Hence, he commanded the ready imp Jingo stealthily to follow St. Giles—to watch wheresoever he might go, and straightway return with the news. Jingo faithfully performed the bidding. At the Cocoa Tree Tom learnt the

whole story of the election. He also picked up the grateful intelligence that the Yellow party had need of fighting patriots; and though Tom's character was more of Ulysses than Achilles, he nevertheless scrupled not to take the wages of a warrior in the cause of purity of election. And then, ardent in the cause, it appeared to him that the talents of his son—as on occasion he ingenuously declared Jingo to be—would potently assist the noble struggle. "The boy piped like any nightingal, and would sing 'em all to sticks in ballads." Whereupon, young Jingo received an appointment as minstrel to the cause; and with his father was dispatched straight to Liquorish.

Now the vehicle that contained Tom Blast and his singing-boy, also carried some dozen other humble Yellows. The merits of the opposing candidates were discussed with that freedom which is one of the happy privileges of our constitution. Whereupon it came out in discourse that the agent for the Blues had taken with him a chest filled with gold; more than enough to bribe every honest man in the kingdom. This news sank into the heart of Blast like water in sand. All the remainder of the way, he thought of that chest of gold devoted to corrupt honest men, and thought how sweet, how justifiable it would be could he save honesty from such temptation by making the pelf his own. St. Giles was of the Blue party: somewhat, no doubt of it, in the confidence of the agent of St. James. It was only to hang on to St. Giles, to work upon the terrors of the transport, to obtain a potent ally in the felony. Already, Blast saw himself the master of a golden treasure; and perhaps his first luck might so come back to him, things might so be managed, that St. Giles alone might be left to pay the penalty. It was plain that chance had intended the chicken-hearted fool the gull for wiser fellows, and Tom was determined not to forego his privilege.

Arrived at Liquorish, Tom in vain sought St. Giles. Nevertheless, he had made all use of the boy. The urchin being shown the abode of Tangle, hung about the house, until he discovered the sleeping-room of that sagacious man. Such discovery was soon made, Mr. Tangle appearing at the window of his bed-chamber. Tangle was a cautious man: it was his reputation—his pride. It has been seen with what especial care he locked the closet—locked the chest that contained his gold—locked the chamber-door: but—by one of those accidents with which Beelzebub delights himself to cheat his best friends—Mr. Tangle forgot, when he descended to breakfast, to close his chamber window. This tremendous error was not unobserved by Jingo and his paternal tutor, both being on the watch for accidents. The window, we say, was open; and chance seemed to offer a glorious

means of success; for an old vine, growing at the wall, offered to the agile limbs of Jingo a most accommodating ladder. He watched his moment. It was early Sunday morning; and nobody was in the street. In a couple of minutes the boy had mounted the topmost branch of the vine, was in at the window, and in a second was under the bed of Tangle. Here he lay a few minutes, taking breath: he then stole forth, and approaching the casement, announced by signs to his anxious father in the street, that all was right. Whereupon, his parent, with few but significant gestures, replied to the boy. We are fortunately enabled to anticipate to the reader the meaning of this pantomime. It was, that Jingo should keep close until night; and then perform a feat that would gild him with renown. Jingo felt the importance of the part put upon him by his adventurous yet careful father: for Tom Blast had provided the boy with apples and biscuits in his pockets, that he might solace and sustain himself the while he lay in wait. And Jingo showed himself worthy of his early training. True it is, that Molly the maid—having for a short time begged the key of Mr. Tangle—entered the chamber, yet Jingo, braced for the occasion, silently munched his biscuit and trembled not. Molly made the bed, singing a rustic ditty the while, and Jingo, cosy and quiet, rather enjoyed the melody than feared the singer. Could Mr. Blast have known the composed heroism of his child, he would have felt in all its fulness, the paternal pride! He, however, continued his search for St. Giles. At length he gathered at the Rose, that his friend—as he had denominated him—had gone to church. He had caused some merriment among the band and others by such eccentricity—nevertheless, he had gone to his devotions. Blast cared not to follow him inside the edifice, but lingered about the churchyard, watching the congregation depart. Already he saw St. Giles approach; but seeing him about to accost Capstick, shrank behind a tomb-stone: and thus it was, whilst watching from this position, that he was recognised by the quick eye of St. Giles, who fled as from a wild beast.

We have now to return to Tangle and Folder. To their astonishment and delight they had, even at the church porch, been invited to dine at Lazarus Hall. There was a condescension, an urbanity, about dear Doctor Gilead, that was not to be refused; and the doctor's carriage being sent to the Olive Branch, the happy couple departed for the rectory. The dinner was magnificent. Of this we feel assured; for Tangle on his progress back to the inn, at least fifty times declared as much. "What wine too!" he cried—"the man, sir, who can give wine like that ought to be a bishop—a bishop, sir; certainly, a bishop." This

opinion Mr. Tangle emphasised by again and again slapping the knee of Mr. Folder, who in vain endeavoured to moderate Tangle's admiration, by feebly answering—"My dear sir,"—"My very dear sir,"—but it availed not.

It was evident from the condition of Mr. Tangle that he did not place wine among secular things: otherwise he had not on such a day meddled so busily with the rector's port. For Mr. Tangle was a particularly sober man. It was the boast of Mrs. Tangle that he had never been *seen* intoxicated: a boast that has with it a certain equivocation. But—it is a truism—every man has his weak moments. Had he not, what an awful person would he be—how set apart, how distantly removed from his fellow-men—frail, daily sinners! No; it is because great men have their weaknesses, that we may assert our common nature with them. We should be abashed, indeed utterly confounded, by their heads of glittering metal, did we not espy their little toes of clay, that reconcile us by the assurance, that they have about them our father Adam's common loam Hence, our reverence may be softened into love. Common weakness breeds common affection.

But—we owe the palliation to Tangle—sure we are, had the patriot not been so strong, the man would not have been so drunk. He had been so animated, so rapt by the prospect of Lord St. James's success, so inexpressibly indignant towards the corrupt and villanous machinations of the Yellows, that when he wanted words, as he so very often did, to express the intensity of his feelings, he invariably applied himself to his wine-glass. At a very early hour of the evening, he had got drunk out of pure admiration of the English Constitution. Nor, let the truth be said, was Mr. Folder innocent of liquor. But, he had this saving clause for himself,—if he was drunk, he was drunk like a gentleman. That is, he neither sang, nor roared, nor slapt his comrade on his knee or shoulder; but sat silently winking his eyes like an owl in the sun, and now and then performing a slight cough, as it appeared to him to set right his dignity.

What change of climate often is to a sick man, change of house is to a drunken one. He feels the stronger for the removal, and therefore drinks again. It was thus with Mr. Tangle. Hence, when safely seated in the Olive Branch, he declared that he must have "one glass more—only one"—the glass, that shows the tippler "many more." Briefly—for why should we linger with the bacchanal?—Mr. Tangle was led by the Boots and Chambermaid to his bed-room, Mr. Folder, with a hard struggle for seeming sobriety, carrying a candle which in his unsteady hand let fall anointing drops of tallow on the head of the vinous and patriotic lawyer. Arrived at the top of the stairs, Tangle

insisted upon being left to his own guidance. Did they want to insult him? Did they think him drunk? He knew the way to his own room; and would have no spies upon his doings. A dim sense of the treasure in his dormitory seemed to steal upon him, and make him of a sudden savagely resolute. He tried at three or four doors, insisting that each was his proper door; and then gradually giving it up as in no way belonging to him. Then he burst into a loud laugh, and declared it was droll—devilish droll. "This reminds me of another inn I once slept at," he cried—"another tavern, where all the doors always changed places after twelve o'clock." At length, he was half-shuffled, half-guided into his own apartment; where, forbidding any one on pain of death to follow him, he was left alone. He cautiously locked the door, and taking therefrom the key, proceeded with devious steps to place it under his pillow. He then staggered to the door of the closet that contained his treasure; and grinned, and pawed and stroked it up and down as though he was caressing some animate thing. By the dim twinkling of the rushlight, young Jingo, his head protruded from the bed's foot—like the head of a tortoise from beneath its shell—watched the drunkard; and, it must be owned, felt something like a sense of contempt for his condition. It was plain the urchin thought the glory of the robbery greatly lessened by the helpless state of the victim to be robbed. The boy, in the vivacity of youthful blood, had expected to see the gentleman gagged at least and tied to the bed-post; and now he would be made to render up his gold patiently as a sheep its wool. Leaving the closet, Tangle approached the bed, and still smiling at his wondrous cunning, placed his watch under the mattress. He next drew from his waistcoat a small pair of pistols which, having eyed with a look of maudlin tenderness, and addressed as his dear preservers, he attempted to place in the watch-pocket at the head of the bed. Unfortunately, they slipped from his fingers, fell at the bed-side, and were instantly secured by young Jingo. Tangle paused; stooped; fumbled about the floor, then with a grunt of resignation, gave up the search. "He shouldn't want 'em—no; he knew he shouldn't want 'em." At length Mr. Tangle found himself between the sheets. His head fell like a lump of dead clay upon the pillow; and in two or three minutes, he was sunk fathoms deep in drunken oblivion.

Jingo—hopeful child!—had a quick eye for business. Mr. Tangle had divested himself of his wardrobe at the bedside; and it was a pretty sight, it would in sooth have warmed the paternal bosom of Tom Blast, could he have beheld Jingo seize garment by garment, and with unerring sagacity, instantly apply

himself to every pocket. Purse, handkerchief, pocket-book—nay, even a curious old steel tobacco-stopper, a Tangle heir-loom—was quickly in the possession of young Jingo. And so, ending the present chapter, we leave them—Tangle in his bed dreaming of triumph; and Jingo under it, really tasting the delicious fruits of plunder.

CHAPTER XXII.

Jingo was born for greatness. He had in his character the great element of a great general, a great statesman; marvellous self-possession. Meaner boys would have been in a flutter of impatience; not so with the pupil of Tom Blast. Hence, he sat under the bed, with critical ear, listening to the hard breathing of the drunken man, who soon began to snore with such discordant vehemence that Jingo feared the sleeper might awaken his bottle friend, Mr. Folder. (Jingo knew it not; but his testimony would have been very valuable to Mrs. Tangle: for the snoring of her husband was one of the disquietudes of that all-suffering woman; the rather, too, that the man constantly denied his tendency to the habit. He never snored. Nobody ever does.)

With knowing, delicate ear, the child continued to listen to the stertorous agent. At length, the boy crept from beneath the bed, and treading lightly as a fairy at a bridal couch, he made his way to the window. Now, had anybody attempted to open it for any honest purpose—had Molly, the maid, for instance, sought to raise it merely to give her opinion of the moon and the night to any rustic astronomer below—it is very certain, that the window would have stuck, or jarred, or rattled; it was too old and crazy to be made a comfortable confidant in any such foolish business. Ten to one, but it had awakened the mistress of the Olive Branch, who would inevitably have nudged the master. And now—a robbery was to be done—a most tremendous robbery, perhaps, to be further solemnised by homicide—for who should say that the Parcæ who wove the red tape of the life of Tangle, attorney-at-law, were not about to snip it: who shall say that so awful a crisis did not at that moment impend?—and yet silently went the window up; easily, smoothly, as though greased by some witch; yes, smeared with fat "from murderer's gibbet." Thus does the devil so oft make wickedness so very easy to the meanest understanding.

Two or three minutes passed, not more, and Tom Blast thrust his head and one of his legs into the chamber. There was a grim smile upon his face, a murderous simper at his mouth, a brassy brightness in his eyes, that showed him to be upon a labour of love. No soldier ever scaled a wall—to receive it may be a bullet or a bayonet, with the after-leaf of laurel that the Gazette punctually lets fall upon his grave—no hero, we say, his nerves strung by shouts, his heart beating to the beating drums, his blood boiling at slaughter heat, his whole soul breathing fire and gunpowder, and all to gloriously slay and sack, and burn—no such adventurous plumed bipsl ever looked more grimly beautiful than did that low-thoughted burglar, that leprous-minded thief. Strange and mournful this to think of! For what was there good or noble to make his muscles iron? What holy flame of patriotism raged in his heart, refining its grossness—what laurel could he hope for, wet with a nation's tears—nations always weeping when the private soldier falls? He had none of these exalting elements to sublimate him, for a time, into an immortal imp of glory. His motive was gold: brutalising gold. His enemy, if he came to close quarters, a weak, wine-soddened old man. His fate, if he should fail, no laurel wreath, but suffocating rope. And yet, alas, for the conceit of poor humanity! Thomas Blast, prepared for robbery, and it might be, bloodshed, looked as horribly animated, as ferociously happy, as though he had mounted some Indian rampart, then and there graciously commissioned to slay man, woman, and child; to pillage and to burn, and all for glory—all for the everlasting fame—of who shall count how many years, or months, or days! How very different the picture—the fate of the two men! And then, again, there is no Old Bailey (at least in this world) for the mighty man of the bully burglar, Mars!

Whilst writing this piece of villany, as, should it perchance find its way into any barrack, it will be called, we have not kept Tom Blast astride upon the window-sill. Oh no! he has business to perform—stern, worldly business, as he deems it—and he has entered the chamber; and with much composure, a placidity which it has been seen he has transmitted to his son, he gazes at the sleeping, hard-breathing Tangle. Mr. Blast was not a man, in any way, above his profession. He never neglected, however petty they might be, any of the details of his art. This feeling of precision was, possibly, born with him; any way, long custom had brought the principle, or whatever it was, as near to perfection as may be allowed to any achievement of fallible humanity. Had destiny put Blast in the respectable position of the attorney in the bed, sure we are, it would have

been the same with him. Certain we are he would have been as particular with his inkhorn, his parchment, his ferret, as he now was with his equipments of dark lantern, crowbar, and rope.

For some moments, Blast, by the aid of his lantern, looked meditatingly upon Tangle. Possibly he felt such a deep sense of security that he liked to dally with his subject, to coquet with robbery, to gently sport with sin, to give it a sweeter flavour. For this is a trick of humanity: in evidence of which, we could and we would quote rosy examples: but no; we will not treat the reader—in this history we have never yet done so—as though his bosom was stuffed, doll like, with bran: we believe that he has a heart beating within it, and to that interpreter, we write, as we should say, many things in short-hand: sometimes we may lose by it; nevertheless, we disdain to spell every passion with its every letter.

"He 'd never be stole for his beauty, would he, Jingo?" asked Blast, in a loud whisper, blandly smiling.

"And whatever beauty he has, he shuts it up when he goes to sleep," replied the child. "Oh, isn't he drunk!" the boy added, with considerable zest.

"He is," said Blast, who still looked contemplative. Then shading the lantern, to catch the best view of Tangle's face, he continued—"What a horrible pictur! He looks as if he 'd come from Indy in a cask of spirits, and was jest laid out, afore he was to be buried. Jingo, my boy,"—and the paternal hand was gently laid upon the boy's head—"Jingo, your poor father may have his faults, like other men; I can't say he mayn't; no; but he isn't a drunkard, Jingo; else he hadn't got on the little he has in the world—he hadn't, indeed. And so, take warning by what you see—by what you see," and Blast stretching his arm towards the sleeper, said this in a low voice—touchingly, paternally. "And now, Jingo," asked the man of business, "where 's the shiners?"

A thoughtless reader may deem it strange, unnatural, that a man about to perpetrate gibbet-work should thus coolly delay, and after his own fashion, moralise. But then such reader must ponder on the effect of long habit. In his first battle—though common history says nothing of it—Julius Cæsar, not from cowardice, but from a strange inward perturbation, bled at the nose: similar accidents may have happened to other heroes when they have drawn what with an odd gallantry is called their maiden sword. Still the reader may not yet comprehend the composure of Tom Blast. The more his loss. But then, probably the reader has never been a housebreaker.

Return we to our colloquy. "Jingo, where 's the shiners?"

"There!" said the boy, pointing to the closet: "and see," he whispered, with a proud look, at the time producing Tangle's pistols—"see, I 've got his pops!"

This touch of early prudence and sagacity was too much for a father's heart. Tom felt himself melted, as with undisguised tenderness he said, taking an oath to the fact—"Well, you are a bloomer, you are!"

At this moment, Tangle rolled upon his side, gabbling something in his sleep. On the instant, Jingo was at the couch, with both his pistols presented at the sleeper's head. The eyes of the little wretch glittered like a snake's—his lips were compressed—his eyebrows knit—his nostrils swelling. At a thought, he looked an imp of murder.

"There 's a beauty," said the encouraging Blast, "don't let him wag; if he should"—it was needless for Blast to finish the injunction; a terrible grin, and a nod from Jingo, showed that he clearly understood the fatherly wish.

"This is the closet, eh?" said Blast, with a very contemptuous look at the frail partition between him and El Dorado. Then Blast took a small crowbar from his pocket; a remarkably neat, portable instrument. For some seconds he stood twirling it in his hand with the composed air of a professor. Had he been a fashionable fiddler, he could not have fondled his alchemic Cremona more tenderly, more lovingly.

One moment he looks at the door. Ha! that was the touch of a master! How it was done, we know not. By what sleight, what dexterity of hand, we cannot guess, but in a few seconds, the door yielding to the instrument, opens with a dull, sudden sound; and Tom Blast surveys Tangle's chest of gold. Blast's son and heir still presenting two pistols at Tangle's drunken head.

At the opening of the door, Jingo looked round and laughed. Before, his eyes were bent upon the sleeping man; and it was plain, from the working of the boy's face, that he was fighting with some horrid thought—some damnable temptation. There was he with death in his two little hands; there was he with a terrible curiosity growing in his features: his lips trembled, and he shifted uneasily on his feet; he breathed hard; he glanced, for an instant, down the muzzle of each pistol. There was the man—sleeping—still alive, though seethed in drink, and looking like death. There he was—the dreaming man with his dreaming murderer. For should the devil—and the boy felt him at his side—should the demon only jog his elbow, crook his finger—and how odd, how strange, how very curious it would be, to see that sleeping face, with a flash, asleep in death; to catch the look—the brief one look—as the soul shot into darkness!

But Tom Blast suddenly burst the door, and the boy laughed and trembled. He thought it very strange—very odd—he could have wept.

"All right," said Tom, "we're lords for life!" He then laid hands upon the box—paused—and looked suddenly blank. Wayward, obstinate Plutus! The god would not be lifted—no, in his heavy divinity, he would not be made to budge. Again and again Tom Blast essayed to stir the god—to take him in his loving arms, and, hugging him to his breast, to bear him to some sweet solitude, and make him all his own. Provoking, was it not, that that which added to the treasure, added to the difficulty? Tom could have cursed the patriotism of the voters of Liquorish, that—the immovable box declared it—bore so high a price. He had no belief that their virtue could have been so very valuable to themselves. Tom, however, would not be baffled. No; a voice issued from the box, that, like the voice of jeering beauty, at once piqued and animated him. And now he was resolved. His sinews might crack—his Adam's clay might be flawed beneath the load—nevertheless, he would lift it.

"Jingo," whispered Tom, "don't move a foot. The damned box"—in this way does ungrateful man too often treat his superflux of wealth!—"can't be lowered out of window; 'twould go smash. I'll creep down and unbolt the door, and then"—Blast had said enough; Jingo nodded his perfect comprehension of his father's plan; and the robber, silently as a shadow glides along the floor, passed from the room. Jingo was alone—alone, with his murderous toys—for to him they were very playthings—and the sleeping sot. Again, did strange thoughts tingle in that mistaught little brain; again did a devilish spirit of mischief begin to possess him; when his paternal monitor returned, with a lightened, a pleased look.

It was, doubtless, a charming sight—a spectacle hugely enjoyed by the few select spectators—to behold Hercules make his final muscular preparation for the achievement of any one of his labours. The majesty of will—that moral regality of man—must have so beamed and flashed around his brows, that even the gods may have looked from the windows of heaven, pleased with a royalty that seemed a shadow of their own. And so be of good heart, ye many sons of Hercules, fighting, wrestling with the monsters of adverse fate—be of good faith, though ye combat in the solitude of a desert; nevertheless, believe it, if ye fight courageously, there are kind looks from heaven always beaming on you.

We incline to the belief that Tom Blast had never heard of Hercules; or if indeed he had, the name was so associated with

the Pillars, that if he ever considered the matter at all, he may perchance have thought Hercules some very famous tapster, and that certain London hostelries known as Hercules' Pillars merely eternised his reputation. We forget, too, the name of the antiquary who wrote a very thick book, proving that the pillars set up by Hercules—vulgarly supposed to commemorate his labours—were no other than a very classic public-house, wherein, after his last day's work, he drained his cool tankard. Be this as it may, Blast was in no way strengthened by the thought of the reforming Hercules, when he prepared himself to lift upon his shoulder that bitter sweet—that "heavy lightness, serious vanity"—that sustaining, crushing weight of gold. Nevertheless, the preparation of Blast was worthy of the best scoundrel hero of the world's old age and weakness. He looked at the box with flashing resolution—set his teeth—fixed his feet—and put forth his arms, as though he would root up an oak.

And now shout, ye imps! Scream, ye devilkins—for it is done! The gold is on the thief's shoulder! His knees quiver beneath the stolen wealth—his chest labours—his face grows purple as grapes—and the veins in his gibbet brow start thick and black with blood,—yet a proud smile plays about his iron mouth, and he looks a Newgate hero!

Breathing hard, in hoarse whispers, the robber gives directions to the boy—"Jingo—good fellow—don't stir—only a minute—only a minute—when I'm clear off—then—you know." And with this broken counsel, Blast, his strength strained to the utmost, turned to the door—and staggered from the room. Young Jingo's face darkened, and now he glanced towards the window, to secure himself a retreat, now he listened to catch the sounds of his father's footsteps. To trip—to stumble but an inch—and what a crashing summons to the whole household would burst from that fallen heap of gold! Still Jingo listened, and still he felt re-assured! The robber made silent and successful progress. It was a difficult passage—that narrow, crooked staircase; and as the thief accommodated his burthen to its winding way, thoughts of mortality would come into the thief's brain; for he marvelled how when anybody died—and it was an old, old house—they carried the coffin down that confined, sinuous path! But gold—heart-strengthening gold—is on his shoulders, and he bears up with Atlantean will, the whilst he moves along noiselessly as the hare limps on the greensward. He has crossed the threshold—closed the door behind him—he is in the wide world, with his fortune on his shoulders. Whither shall he go?

Direct, assist him, ye good genii that, all unseen, favour and strengthen the mere money-maker; the man, who only eats, and

drinks, and takes his temperate rest, that he may be keener at a bargain, sharper for profit. How many,—save that their golden burdens are lawful gains; that is, obtained by no gross violation of the statute—are, like Tom Blast, puzzled, confounded, by the very treasure they have toiled for? What a hard, ungrateful weight, their monstrous wealth! Somehow, with all the blessings mingled with it, they cannot extract heart's ease from it. They sweat and toil under the load, when—though they know not how to secure the happiness—they would fain sit themselves down on some green, pleasant spot, and enjoy their long-toiled-for delight. No, it may not be. The spirit—the sole possessing spirit that, day and night, made them subdue all gentler, softer influences, to the one exhausting purpose, wealth—the spirit is still their despot, and rules them as tyrannously when in cloth of gold, as when in frieze. They have worked—sweated for the precious load; and, when obtained, it is hung about with fears. How many have crawled, brute-like, on all-fours through dirty, winding ways to wealth, with the sweet unction at their souls that, arrived at the glorious bourne, they would then walk very erect; would cleanse themselves of the inevitable defilements of the road: would, in sooth, become very sweet men indeed. Well, they have reached the shrine; they have learned the true "Open Sesame!"—they are rich, past all their morning dreams of wealth—but somehow, there is the trick of old habit,—they cannot well stand upright; and their hands have been so dirtied, feeling their way to Plutus, it seems to them a foolish task to try to whiten and purify them. This, however, they can do. They can, somehow, blind the world: yes, they can put on very white gloves.

Take from Tom Blast the spot of felony, and—as he staggers onward in darkness and uncertainty, almost crushed with his weight of wealth,—knowing not where to find repose—he is no other than your monstrously rich man, who has exchanged his heart at the Mint for coined pieces.

Fatigued, perplexed with rising fears, the robber goes on his unknown way. He strikes wide from the village—goes down lanes, crosses fields. And then he pauses; and casting his load upon the earth, he sits upon it, takes off his hat, and wipes the streaming sweat from his brow, a myriad of unthought-of stars looking down upon his felon head.

Yes; he has taken the good resolution. He will henceforth be an honest, respectable man. Let fate be only so kind as to assure him his present spoil, and he will wash his hands of all such work for the rest of his days. He will, he thinks, leave London. Yes; he will discipline his soul to forego the sweet allurements

the magic wiles of that city of Comus. He will go into the country, and be very good to the poor. He will change his name. With such change, he cannot but slough much of the bad reputation that the prejudice of society has fixed upon him. He will become a country gentleman. He will give away a bullock and blankets at Christmas. He will go regularly to church. Yes; he will show that he can be truly religious; for he will have a pew as fine, if not finer, than any pew he had peeped into yesterday. If fate for this once, this last time, be only kind to him! This virtuous determination so befooled the felon, that he felt his heart opened; felt all his nature softened to receive the best and kindliest impressions. Though, in his various crooked ways, Tom Blast had gulled many, many men, yet had he never so completely duped any man, as, at that moment, Tom duped Tom. He felt himself mightily comforted. He looked around him at the hedges, the trees; as though carefully noting their particular whereabout. He rose blithely, with some new resolution. With renewed strength he swung the box upon his shoulder, and in a few minutes he had hidden it. He would come back at a proper season, and with proper means, to take sure possession of it.

Return we to Tangle's chamber. Oh, innocent sleep! There was the parliamentary agent—the man with the golden key to open the door of St. Stephen's to young St. James—there was he, still in port-wine slumbers—still sunk in the ruby sea! Beautiful was the morning! The nimble air frolicked in at the open window, for the mercurial Jingo had not closed it when he departed with Tangle's treasures. The glorious sun rose blushing at the ways of slothful man. The sparrows, tenants of the caves, flew from distant fields, many a one proving, by the early worm that writhed about its bill, the truthfulness of proverb lore. And still the attorney slept! Sleep on, poor innocence! Thou knowest not the gashes cut in thy pocket: thou knowest not how that is bleeding mortal drops of coined blood; for how much seeming gold is there, that, looked upon aright, is aught other substance? Sleep on.

And Tangle sleeps and dreams. A delicious vision creases and wrinkles his yellow face like folds in parchment. Yes; Tangle dreams! And we know the particular dream, and—sweet is the privilege!—we may and will tell it. Somnus did not kindly send to the lawyer a visionary courier to apprise him of his loss; and so to break the affliction to his sleep that, waking, he might perhaps the better endure it. Oh no! there would have been no sport in that. Contrast is the soul of whim; and Somnus was inclined to a joke with the attorney.

Whereupon, Tangle dreamt that he was on his death-bed; and nevertheless, bed to him had never been so delicious. He knew his hour was come: a smiling angel, all effulgence, had told him so. And Tangle, calling up a decent look of regret at his wife and children, standing about him, told them to be comforted, as he was going immediately to heaven. This he knew; and it showed their ignorance to look any doubt of the matter. That chest of gold—the gold once taken to pay the electors of Liquorish—was, after the manner of dreams, somehow his own property. And therefore, he ordered the chest to be placed on the foot of his bed, and opened. The lid was raised; and oh, what a glory! It was filled to the edge with bright, bright guineas, all bearing the benevolent face—a wonderful likeness; in fact, as every face on gold is, a speaking likeness, for it talks every tongue—of George the Third! When Tangle saw them he smiled a smile—ay, could we have followed it—to the very roots of his heart. "I am going to heaven," said he; "I have toiled all my life for that goodly end; I have scraped and scraped those blessed things together, knowing that if I had enough of them to bear my weight, they would carry me straight to Paradise. No, my dear wife, my darling children, think not my brain is wandering; think me not light-headed; for at this solemn time, this awful moment, I only hope to consummate the great object of my life. I have made money in this world, that, by its means, I might make sure of heaven in the next. And they"—and Tangle again pointed to the guineas—"those bright celestials will carry me there!" And now comes the wonderful part of the dream. When Tangle had ceased speaking, every guinea rose, as upon tiny wings from the box; and, like a swarm of bees, filled the death-chamber with a humming sound. And then gradually every King George the Third face upon the guinea grew and rounded into a cherub head of glittering gold, the wings extending and expanding. And who shall count the number of the cherubim glorifying the chamber with their effulgence, and making it resound with their tremendous music! A short time, and then Tangle dreamt that the cherubim were bearing him from his bed—all lifting, all supporting him, all tending him in his upward flight. And then again he smiled at his worldly wisdom, for he felt that every guinea he had made—no matter how, upon earth—was become an angel, helping him to heaven. And still in his dream—smiling and smiling, he went up—up—up!

Now, if any cavilling reader disputes the authenticity of this dream—if, pushing it aside, he calls it extravagant and ridiculous, we are, without further preparation, ready to prove it a very

reasonable and likely dream; a dream that is no other than a visionary embodiment of the waking thoughts of many a man, who hoards and hoards, as though every bit of gold was, as the lawyers have it, seizin of Paradise. When (and it does sometimes happen,) a high dignitary of the Church dies with a coffer of some hundred and forty thousand pounds, who shall say that the good man has not hoarded them, in the belief that every pound will serve him as an angel to help him to bliss? He knows he cannot take them to heaven; but, with a wisdom unknown to much of the ignorant laity, he evidently believes that they can carry him there. Hence, even Church avarice, properly considered, may be excellent religion; hence, a crawling, caterpillar miser may only crawl to soar the higher—a triumphant Psyche!

And still Tangle, in his dream, was ascending to the stars. —Was ever man brought back to this earth with so terrible a shock?

"Hallo! Bless me! My good friend! Well, you have a constitution! Sleep with the window open!"

Such were the exclamations of Mr. Folder, up and arrayed for an early walk. Though by no means unwell from the last night—certainly not, for he was never soberer in his life—he thought he would take a ramble in the fields just to dissipate a little dulness, a slight heaviness he felt; and being of a companionable nature, he thought he would hold out to Mr. Tangle the advantage of society. Whereupon, Mr. Folder tried the attorney's door, and, finding it unlocked, with the pleasant freedom of a friend he entered the chamber. The opened window struck him with astonishment. The election was not over, and Mr. Tangle might catch his death. Again Folder gave voice to his anxiety. "My dear sir,—Mr. Tangle—the window"—

"Ten thousand cherubs," said Tangle, still in the clouds,—"ten thousand, and not one less. I knew I had ten thousand; and all good: not a pocket-piece among 'em. Cherubs!"

"Bless my soul!" said Folder, "he's in some sweet dream: and with the window open. Well, if I could dream at all under such circumstances, I should certainly dream I was in a saw-mill with a saw going through every joint of my body. And, what's more, I should wake and find it all true. Mr. Tangle!"

With other exclamations—with still more strenuous pulling—Mr. Folder saw that he was about to achieve success. There were undeniable symptoms of Mr. Tangle's gradual return to a consciousness of the £ *s. d.* of this world. Gradually, cherub by cherub was letting him down easily to this muddy earth. The attorney stretched out his legs like a spider—flung up his arms

—and with a tremendous yawn opened his mouth so wide, that Mr. Folder—but he was not a man of high courage—might perhaps have seen that attorney's very bowels. Tangle unclosed his stiffly-opening eyelids. It was plain there was a mist—possibly a cloud, as from burnt claret—passing before his orbs: for it was some moments before the face of Mr. Folder loomed through the vapour. At length, Tangle—with every vein in his head beating away as though it would not beat in such fashion much longer; no, it must burst—at length Tangle, resolving to be most courageously jolly, laughed and cried out—"Well, what 's the matter?"

"Why, my dear friend," said Folder, "as to-day is a busy day, I thought we could not be too fresh for work: and so, as we were a little late. I may say, too, a little wild last night"—

"Pooh, pooh; not a bit. I never felt better: never, in all my life. I always know when I'm safe, and drink accordingly. Never was yet deceived, sir; never. There 's no port in the world I 'd trust like the port you get from certain gentlemen of the cloth: they 're men above deceit, sir; above deceit."

"Nevertheless, I do think a walk in the fields—just a turn before breakfast"—

"No," said Tangle, turning upon his side, evidently set upon another nap: "no; I like buttercups and daisies, and all that sort of thing—breath of cows, and so forth—but not upon an empty stomach."

"Well, to be sure," said Folder, "you economise. You get your air and sleep together."

"What do you mean?" grunted Tangle.

"Why, you sleep with your window open, don't you?" asked Folder.

"Never," replied Tangle.

"No: then who has opened it for you?"

Mr. Tangle raised himself in his bed. We will not put down the oath which to the astonishment of Folder, Tangle thundered forth, when he saw his casement open to the winds. Suddenly he leapt from the bed; and as suddenly Mr. Folder quitted the chamber.

"Robbery! Murder!" cried Tangle, with amazing lungs.

Now, we have never known this confusion of terms in any way accounted for. True it is, Mr. Tangle saw, as he believed, the clearest evidence of robbery; but there was no drop, no speck of blood, to afford the slightest hint of homicide. Wherefore, then, should he, falling into a common error of humanity, couple murder with theft? Why, is it, we ask, that infirm man, suddenly awakened to a loss of pelt, so often connects with the

misfortune, the loss of life? Are purse-strings and heart-strings so inevitably interwoven? We merely let fall this subject for the elucidation of the metaphysician; and so pursue our story.

"Robbery! Murder!" yelled Tangle, dancing in his shirt about the room, like a frantic Indian. Mr. Folder, at the door, took up the cry, and in a few minutes, landlord and landlady, chambermaid, waiter, and boots, with half-a-dozen tenants of the Olive Branch, were at Tangle's door. "A minute—only a minute," cried Tangle, as they were about to enter—"Not dressed yet—the murderous thieves—nearly naked—the scoundrel malefactors—guineas, guineas—gone—gone—where's my stockings!" Very distressing to a soul of sympathy was the condition of Mr. Tangle. As he hunted about the floor for his scattered articles of dress, his face—he could not help it—was turned towards the empty closet, as though in his despair he thought some good fairy might replace the treasure there, even while he looked. —Thus, looking one way, and seeking his raiment in divers others, he brought his head two or three times in roughest companionship with the bed posts. At length, very sternly rebuked by one of these monitors, he made a desperate effort at tranquillity. He ceased to look towards the closet. Setting his teeth, and breathing like a walrus, he drew on his stockings. He then encased his lower members in their customary covering; and then the turned-out pockets once more smit his bruised soul. He dropt upon the bed, and sent forth one long, deep, piteous groan. "The murderous villains! Even my 'bacco-stopper!" he cried: and then his eyelids quivered; but he repressed the weakness, and did not weep. "Somebody shall swing for this—somebody!" he said; and this sweet, sustaining thought seemed for a time mightily to comfort him. And thus, the attorney continued to dress himself, his hand trembling about every button-hole; whilst the crowd at his chamber-door exchanged sundry speculations as to the mode and extent of the robbery, the landlord loudly exclaiming that nothing of the sort had ever been known in his house: a statement emphatically confirmed by his dutiful helpmate.

"And now," cried Tangle, tying the while his neckcloth like a hay-wisp; "and now, ladies and gentlemen, you may come in." Instantly the chamber was thronged. "Look here—look here," he said, waving his hand towards the empty closet as a tremendous show—"this is a pretty sight, I think, for a respectable house!"

"What's the matter, sir?" said the landlord. "Have you lost anything?"

"Lost anything!" exclaimed Tangle; "only a box of gold! Yes—I—I won't say how many guineas."

There was something touching, awful, in this intelligence; for every one of the hearers, in some way or the other, called upon Heaven to bless him or her, as the case might be; everybody also declaring, that he or she had never heard of such a thing.

"But, sir," said the landlord, very provokingly, "are you sure there 's no mistake—was it there when you went to bed?"

To this impertinent, insulting, unfeeling question, Tangle made no verbal answer. He merely looked daggerwise in the face of the querist, and laughed scornfully, hysterically. He might as well have laughed in the dead face of a dead-wall, for the landlord continued:

"Because you know, sir, and this gentleman"—he meant Fodder—"and Molly Chambermaid, and boots, and my wife, all know that you was a little the worse or the better for liquor, as you may think it, when you come home from Lazarus Hall. You must feel that, sir; I 'm sure you do feel it."

"I tell you what, landlord," said Tangle. "I tell you what, sir; this insolence shall not serve your turn—not at all. You shall not rob me of my reputation to cover the robbery of my money."

"*I* rob you! *I* rob you!" cried the landlord, advancing towards Tangle, and followed by his wife, the maid, and boots, all taking part in the music——"*He* rob you! Master rob you!"

"Look there! I take you all to witness," cried Tangle, running to the bed, plucking away the pillows, and showing a key—"the key of the closet; of that very closet. Now, had I forgotten myself for a moment as a gentleman or a man of business, is it likely that I should have been so particular with that key?"

"They must have come in at the winder," said the boots, gaping at the open casement.

"Hallo! my fine fellow," cried the too subtle Tangle; "you seem to know something about it?"

"Acause," answered the unshaken boots, "acause this gentleman said he found the winder open."

The landlord approached the closet, looked about it as though possibly the box might still be in some corner; then scratched his head; then with his thumb and finger felt the bolt of the lock and then sagaciously observed; "He was an old hand as did this. All the marks on it, sir; all the marks on it."

"A great consolation," answered Tangle, with a ghastly grin. "Well, Mr. Landlord, seeing yourself in this condition—what do you propose?" And the looks of the landlord answered—Nothing.

"You see, sir," at length the Olive Branch made answer

"you see, sir, this is 'lection time. Now, there isn't a honester place in the world—though I was born in it, I must say it—than Liquorish. But at 'lection time, all sorts of villains come about us, as you must know. I don't see what you can do——Yes; you can send the bellman round with a reward for the thief—and"—

"Pooh, pooh, foolish man!" cried Folder, who then drew Tangle aside. "Don't you see, my dear sir, how such a step would damage us? Don't you see how it would serve the other party? Imagine! 'Lost, a box of guineas from the Olive Branch!' Consider; what squibs they 'd fire at us. They 'd swear,—that is, they would insinuate,—that we had brought down the gold to bribe the electors."

"That never struck me," answered Tangle; "'tis more than likely. Heaven help us! What 's to be done? Five-and-thirty years have I been in practice; and never—never before such a blow. Stript, sir—stript," he said, in a tone of maudlin sorrow—"stript even of my 'baccy stopper."

At this moment, Doctor Gilead's carriage drove up to the door, and the footman entered the Olive Branch, bearing a letter for Mr Folder. This arrival, coupled with the silence of Tangle, caused the landlord, landlady, boots, and chambermaid to quit the room; and they were speedily followed by others, some of whom said, "What a pity!" some, "How very odd!" and some, "It was very mysterious; but doubtless time would show."

"My dear friend," said Folder, having read the missive, "it is a summons from his lordship, who observes that we may as well blend breakfast with business. We 've no time to lose."

Tangle looked blankly at the floor—blankly at the ceiling. He then wolfingly observed, "That such a calamity should happen to me! To me, above all men in the world! How can I ever face his lordship!"

"My good friend, it 's not so bad. The loss, heavy as it is," said Folder, with a smile, "can't be ruin."

"You 're a kind comforter, Mr. Folder; indeed you are," said Tangle, trying hard at a smile on his own account.

"For you 're a rich man, Mr. Tangle; a very rich man, and can make up the loss without"—

"*I* make up the loss, Mr. Folder! *I* make—pardon me, my dear sir, you really speak in total ignorance of such matters. No, the gold being his lordship's—for his lordship's special use—if an accident has unfortunately happened to it—why, of course"—

"Well," replied Folder, catching the drift of Tangle, "that you can settle with his lordship himself. In the mean time,

we had better prepare for our visit. I sha'n't be five minutes—but you—you need a little preparation. Don't you shave this morning?"

"Not for millions would I attempt it, Mr. Folder. In my state of mind, not for millions. I couldn't do it, sir—I couldn't so provoke fate. I tell you what I 'll do—I 'll walk on: in my present condition, I'd rather walk. I shall find a barber in the village, and—I shall be at the Hall as soon as you—tell his lordship quite as soon as you."

And Tangle, with a wandering eye, and unsteady hand, sought and took his hat. He then ran from the chamber, and Mr. Folder retired to his own apartment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The borough of Liquorish possessed two barbers—only two. Happily, however, the number was sufficient to admit of daily rivalry; for let this truth never be forgotten—two can hate as well as twenty. Now, the hatred of Rasp and Flay welled up from their love of the same thing, the British Constitution. Mr. Rasp loved that elastic object with a tender and reverential love; he always approached its consideration with a fluttering, a sweet concern. The British Constitution was the apple of his eye—the core of his heart. He loved it beyond any other thing appertaining to this loveable earth. His wife—meek, injured woman!—has often considered herself slighted and despised by the libertine preference. "A married man with a family," Mrs. Rasp would sometimes petulantly observe, and sometimes not, "should n't trouble his head with such nonsense." Occasionally, too, she would very much like to know what the Constitution, as they called it, had ever done for the poor? And when Rasp—in moments of ale—has expressed himself perfectly willing, nay, rather anxious, to lose his head for the Constitution, his wife has only placidly remarked, "that it was more than he 'd ever think of doing for her."

Now, Flay loved the Constitution after a different fashion. It was a pretty object—very pretty, indeed; very desirable, very essential for the happiness, or at least for the enjoyment of man. Flay loved the Constitution with a sort of oriental love; it was the passion of the Great Turk for some fair, stag-eyed slave; the affection of one who is the master, the owner, of the creature of his delights—the trading possessor of the lovely goods; and therefore,

when it shall so please him, at perfect freedom to sell or truck, or bow-string, or put in a sack or in any other way to turn the penny with, or dispose of the idol of his adoration. Yes: Flay thought the Constitution, like the flesh-and-blood pearl of a harem, might now be devouringly loved, and now be advantageously bartered. Where the man, living in the twilight obscurity of Liquorish, learned such principles, we know not. Certain it is, they were very far beyond his social condition.

We have now to task the indulgence of the reader to endeavour to remember that Mr. Tangle, dizzy and tremulous, quitted the Olive Branch, summoned to Lazarus Hall by his lordship. The wine still sang in his ears, and the evil spirits that men swallow as angels in their cups over night, beat in Tangle's beating heart, and twitched his nerves, and seemed to turn his eyes into burning-glasses, as he found himself in the street. And then came the loss of the gold upon his brain—came with a crash, stupifying, stunning, as though the metal itself had fallen upon that divine web-work of nerves—wherein Tangle's soul, spider-like, lurked for human flies—and smitten him out of life. And then his stomach seemed to hold within it one possessing nausea; and he looked at the rosy children about him—the red-faced, laughing neighbours, and wondered what they were made of.

Nevertheless one thought like a star shone brightly through this fog of soul, for the said soul was much obscured by the wine-mists from the stomach—the thought of the barber. Tangle must be shaved. It had been one of the principles of his existence—one of the bundle of determinations with which he had set out on the pilgrimage of life—or rather, this principle he had taken up at the twenty-mile stage—to suffer no man to take him by the nose save himself. In the vanity of his philosophy, he had believed that no possible blow of fortune could have rendered his hand unsteady at the morning razor; and now, with the loss of the gold upon him, he shuddered at the thought of the sacrificial steel. In the disorder of his soul and the sickness of his stomach, he saw himself shaving; and saw a very numerous family of imps laughing and winking in the glass—and pointing their fingers at his throat—and then grinning hard again—and nodding, and smacking their forked tongues, as revelling in the hope of a delicious tragedy. And Tangle—for we choose to give the whole truth—Tangle did for a moment sympathise with these murder-hinting demons. It was weak—it was wicked; but in another moment, the idea was sternly banished. For Tangle remembered that his life was insured; and how every dreadful it would be, should he leave the world in a way to forfeit the policy! With these thoughts, Mr. Tangle entered the shop of Rasp. He entered and

shrunk back. "Come in, sir," cried the hospitable barber. "Here, Tim, finish this gentleman." Saying this, Rasp instantly quitted the beard he was about to reap, for the chin of the new-comer. Tangle looked about him, and felt himself a little wounded, somewhat disgraced by the meanness, the rustic poverty of the shop. He looked too at the man lathered to the eyes—the man consigned to Tim, Rasp's little boy, who quickly mounted a stool, that he might the better possess himself of the nose of the customer. Now, albeit the features of the man were very thickly masked by soap-suds, it was the instant conviction of Tangle that he saw coarse, dirty lineaments beneath; and thereupon his pride started at the thought of losing his beard in such company. Had Tangle felt himself the prosperous man of yesterday, certainly he would as soon have offered his neck to the axe, as his chin to the self-same brush that had lathered the beard of that very vulgar man; but adversity had chastised pride, and after a natural twinge or two, Tangle sank resignedly on the wooden chair, and with an all but smothered sigh, gave himself up to the barber. Certainly, he had never been shaved in such company; but then—the thought was a great support to his independent spirit—nobody would know it.

(Nobody would know it! How much insult, injury—how many hard words, fierce threats—nay, how many tweakings of the nose might be borne by some forgiving souls, if—nobody would know it! What a balm, a salve, a plaster to the private hurt of a sort of hero may the hero find in the delicious truth that—nobody knows it! The nose does not burn, for nobody saw it pulled! It is the eye of the world looking on, that, like the concentrated rays of the sun, scorches it; blisters it; lights up such a fire within it, that nothing poorer than human blood can quench it! And all because everybody knows it!)

Tangle was reconciled to his humiliation—for it was nothing less to be handled in such a shop and by such a barber—by the belief that the world would remain in ignorance of the degrading fact. And much, indeed, at the moment, did Tangle owe to ignorance. He knew that he was a crushed, despoiled, degraded being: he knew that with the box of gold he had lost his sense of self-respect. Compared to the Tangle of yesterday, he was no better than a Hottentot; for he had lost his better part. This he knew: but, ignorant sufferer, he did not know that the man seated in lathered companionship beside him was the midnight burglar, the robber of his more than peace, the felonious Tom Blast. Now, Mr. Blast himself immediately recognised the parliamentary agent; but feeling that he had the advantage of having looked upon him when Tangle could not return the

attention, the robber gazed very composedly through his lather: nay more, he was so tickled by the sudden advent of Tangle that, in the gaiety of his soul, he chuckled.

"If you please, sir, if you laugh," said little Tim, "I must cut you."

"The child has a hand as light as a butterfly"—said the barber father to Blast—"but the boy's right; he must cut you if you laugh. Steady, Tim."

"All right," cried Blast, from his sonorous chest; and he stiffened the cords of his visage.

"Very odd, sir"—said Rasp, vigorously lathering Tangle, as though he was white-washing a dead wall—"very odd, sir; when a man's being shaved, what a little will make him laugh.—Never heard it properly accounted for, sir, did you?"

Tangle spoke not; but shivered out a long sigh, evidently provocative of the mirthful Blast, for little Tim again cried,—"If you please, sir, I must cut you."

"Don't blame the child, sir: that's all. Steady, Tim"—said the barber, who again addressed himself to Tangle. "Glad to find there's no laugh in you, sir." Tangle made no answer; but again sighed as with the ague.

"There! I know'd I should cut you!" cried Tim, as Blast winced, and the blood came from his cheek. "I know'd I should do it."

The barber turned from Tangle to take a view of the mischief done upon Blast, gravely observing, as he eyed the blood—"Not the child's fault, sir. Never cut before in his life; never."

"Well, it 's no use a stifling it," cried Blast; and gently putting Tim aside, he flung himself back in the chair, and roared a laugh, all the louder and the deeper for its long repression. Tangle looked round. Most strange, nay, most insulting was it to him—to him with the load of affliction weighing on his brain—that any man should laugh so vehemently, so brutally. On his way to the barber's, Tangle had felt a little hurt that even the birds should chirp and twitter; that the flowers in the gardens should look so happy in their brightness! The very fineness of the day seemed unkind to him; nevertheless he tried to bear it like a man. But to have his solemn thoughts, deep as they were in a lost money-chest, outraged by the vulgar merriment of a very vulgar man,—it was cruel, barbarous; surely he had done nothing to deserve it.

"It 's very odd," said Tangle, speaking both angrily, and sorrowfully, "very odd that a gentleman can't be quietly shaved without people"—

"Ax your pardon," said Blast. "Hope the barber's not

nicked you ; but I couldn't help it. You know what a little will make a man laugh sometimes. All right now I 've got rid of it. Go on, little shaver. I 'll keep a cheek as stiff as a mile-stone." And Mr. Blast resolved to control his merriment, sorely tempted as it was by the proximity of the melancholy man he had plundered. It was a most capital joke, a most provoking piece of fun, yet would the thief be serious. For some seconds not a sound was heard, save the mowing of beards.

" Well, Measter Rasp, here be a rumpus ! here be a blow for the Blues ! here be luck for the Yellows ! Ho ! ho ! ho ! There never was sich a mess. I ha 'nt laughed so much since they put the tinker in the stocks ! Sich a glory ! " This announcement, brokenly uttered through roars of laughter, was delivered by Skittle, the cobbler of Liquorish, who, exploding with the intelligence, burst into the shop.

" What 's the matter ? " asked the barber, so alive to the luck of the Yellows, of which party he felt himself a very shining particle, that he paused in his shaving ; holding 'wixt finger and thumb the nose of Tangle. " Luck for our side, Bob ! What is it ? "

" Why you must know that the Blues—jest like 'em—brought down a box of golden guineas. You know, in course, what for ? " observed the cobbler, severely winking one eye.

" I should think I did," answered Rasp, and he stropped his razor on his hand very impatiently. " That 's the way they serve the Constitution. That 's how they 'd sell and buy the British Lion, for all the world like veal. Well, a box of guineas : I should like to catch 'em offering me any, that 's all," cried Rasp : and with a grin of indignation, he again stropped his blade.

" My good man," said Tangle, very meekly, for he was overcome, brokenhearted by the mirth of the cobbler,—" my good man, will you proceed and finish me ? "

" Wouldn't trust myself, sir, till I 've heard all about the Blues. You don't know my feelings," said Rasp. " I should slice you, sure as pork. Go on, Bob. Ha ! ha ! Down with the Blues ! " And still Tangle sat half-shaven and wholly miserable, listening to the blithe story of the cobbler, whose notes of exultation struck like steel into the flesh of the outraged agent. Was ever man so tried ? He could not bounce from his chair, and with half his beard upon him sally forth into the street. No ; he was doomed by decency to sit and hear the history of his wretchedness and the brutal mirth it occasioned. The cobbler and barber roared with laughter ; little Tim smirked and giggled, and Tom Blast, with his eyes leering towards the agonised Tangle, showed that

the sweetest and deepest satisfaction filled the bosom of the thief. His felon soul hugged itself in vast enjoyment of the fun!

"Well, you must know that the Olive Branch was broke open last night," said the cobbler, "and the box of guineas brought to the borough—we know what for"—and Skittle put his forefinger to his nose.

"I should rather think we did," responded Rasp, returning the digital signal. "Rather."

"The box of guineas carried off; all took wing like young goldfinches. The landlord says, and his wife says, she's sure of it, too, that it 's the devil has done it."

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted Tom Blast, mightily enjoying the false accusation. "Poor devil!"

"I don't wonder at your laughing," said the barber, gravely. "It wasn't no devil; the devil 's a better judge than to carry away gold of that sort; it would do his work all the better left behind. And is there no suspicion of who 's stole it?" Here Blast and Tangle listened attentively, but assuredly with a different sort of curiosity.

"Why, that 's the worst of it," answered the cobbler; "they 've tried hard to suspect everybody, but somehow they can make no hand on it."

Hereupon the barber wrinkled his brow, and thoughtfully and tenderly with his fingers twiddled at the end of his nose, as though he had the secret there, if it could only be coaxed out. "I tell you what it is; 'tisn't seldom I 'm wrong—I know the thief."

"You!" exclaimed Tangle; and "You!" was at the lip of Blast; but that cautious man smothered the impatient word with a sort of grunt that passed for nothing.

"He 'll never be found out; oh no, he 's too cunning for that," said the barber; "but I shouldn't wonder if the fellow that had the keeping of the money isn't him that stole it."

"Was there ever such an infamous!"—exclaimed Tangle, when he was suddenly stopped by the peremptory coolness of the barber; who, tapping him on the shoulder, observed—"Bless you! it 's a thing done every day. Nothing more likely."

"Nothing," said Blast, in his deepest bass, and his eye twinkled enjoyingly.

"Am I to stay here half-shaved all day?" cried the goaded Tangle. "Fellow, finish me!"

"Tell you, couldn't trust myself till we hear the rights of the guineas," said the patriotic barber. "They was brought here to violate the Constitution, and whomsoever 's got em, I 'm glad

they 're gone. Though mind, I 'd take a bet that him that 's lost 'em knows best where they 're to be found."

"Ha! Master Barber," cried Blast in a loud tone of compliment, "it 's plain you know life."

"Why, I 've seen a few 'lections at Liquorish," said Rasp, "and this I will say—the Blues, if they know'd him, would rob their own father. I might, in my time, have had my hat full of guineas"—

"I shouldn't brag of that, if I was you, Mr. Rasp"—said the barber's wife, suddenly descending to a cupboard in the shop, for some domestic purpose—"I shouldn't brag of that, and you to keep me and your children as you do."

"Women have no love of country," said the barber in a soft voice as his wife departed.

"Don't understand a bit on it," said the cobbler. "There 's my old Margery Daw at home—she says that women have enough to do to love their husbands."

"And that 's hard work sometimes," said the barber. "I 'm afeard it is."

"Am I to be shaved to-day?" roared Tangle, the lather dried to a plaster on his face.

"I tell you what it is, sir," said the barber. "You 're half shaved as clean as any baby: now shaving 's a penny: well, if you can't wait, you 're welcome to the ha'porth you 've had for nothing. A ha'penny sir," and the barber looked loftily about him, "a ha'penny won't ruin me."

"I 'm in no 'urry," observed the accommodating Blast. "Your little boy can finish the gentleman—I 'll wait."

"Thank you—very kind—come along, boy," cried Tangle, and Tim moved his stool beside the lawyer. "Now you 'll be very particular; and mind, don't cut."

"Then don't shake, sir, if you please," said Tim; for Tangle, agitated by what he had heard, by the delay he had been compelled to suffer, trembled as the boy touched him, like a jelly. And as he trembled, the barber leered suspiciously, directing the cobbler's looks to the shaking gentleman; and Tom Blast very soon made one of the party of inspection, communicating by most eloquent glances, the strongest doubts and suspicions of the individual then impatiently undergoing the discipline of the razor.

"If the thief 's caught, I suppose he 'll be hanged," said the cobbler, staring at Tangle.

"Heaven is merciful! I hope so—heartily hope so," exclaimed Tangle vivaciously, earnestly; at the same time jumping up, his shaving completed. "I hope so: I 'd go fifty miles to see it—

fifty miles. Give me change." Saying this, and tying his neck-cloth, Tangle laid down sixpence. "Make haste."

Very leisurely, and as with a soul by no means to be dazzled by sixpences, the barber took up the tester. He then approached the bottom of the staircase ascended by his helpmate, and with measured syllables inquired, "Eliza Jane, love, have you change for sixpence?"

And this gentle query was answered by another, running thus: "Have I change for the Bank of England?"

"It never happened so before, sir," said Rasp, feeling the sixpence, "but we hav'n't a copper halfpenny in the house. The child, sir, shall run out for change. Won't be ten minutes; nothing beats him at an errand."

Tangle looked savagely about him. He could not wait: he would not be thought to give the sixpence. He therefore observed, very emphatically, "Very well, barber; I'll call again," and hurried away.

"Don't you know him?" cried the cobbler, "he's one of the Blues."

"Well, if I didn't think he was one of them thick-skinned lot while I was shaving him," said Rasp; who then turned to Blast. "He knows something of them guineas, eh, sir, I'm bound for it!"

"Xactly," answered Blast. "They're a pretty set—them Blues. I'm a Yellow."

"I'd know that, sir"—observed the barber as he finished the undone work of Tim—"I'd know that, sir, by the tenderness of your face. Now for that old Blue, a man might as well shave a brass knocker. I can tell a man's principles by his skin, I can."

"Not a doubt on it," averred Mr. Blast, very sonorously; who then rose from his chair, and proceeded into a corner to consult a fragment of glass, nailed to the wall. Whilst thus courageously surveying his face, his back turned to the door, another customer entered the shop, and without a syllable, seating himself, awaited the weapon of Rasp.

"Heard of the robbery, sir?" asked the barber. "Ha! ha! ha! Rare work, sir. What I call fun."

"What robbery?" cried the stranger, and immediately Blast turned at the sound, and knew that it was St. Giles who spoke. Silently, the burglar grinned huge satisfaction.

"Thousands of guineas stole last night, nothing less. I wish you and I had 'em, sir, that's all, for they come here to do Beelzebub's work, sir; to be laid out in perjury, and all that; to buy the honest souls of honest men like mackerel. Therefore," concluded the barber, "I say I wish you and I had 'em. Don't you?"

Hereupon Blast quitted the mirror, and the while serenely tying his neckcloth, stood face to face with St. Giles, chuckling and echoing the barber—"Don't you wish you had 'em?"

"If you jump in that way," cried Rasp to St. Giles, "I won't answer for your nose."

"And you hav'n't heard nothin' on it, eh, sir?" said Blast, in his light, waggish manner. "Well, I should ha' thought you'd ha' known all about it."

"Why?" stammered St. Giles, for he felt that he must make some answer.

"Oh, I don't know," said Blast; "some people have sich a knowin' look, that 's all. They 're born with it. An 'praps you wouldn't like to have the guineas stole from the Blues,—if they are stole But as you say, Mr. Barber, I don't believe it. Bless your heart, it 's my 'pinion a Blue would swear anything."

"You won't have a drop of ale this morning?" asked the cobbler—that sympathetic Yellow being mightily touched by the large-heartedness of Blast. "Jest a drop?"

"'Tis a little early," said the very temperate Blast, "but I can't refuse a Yellow nothin'." And to the astonishment and relief of St. Giles, his tormentor followed the inviting cobbler from the shop. Uneasily sat St. Giles whilst Rasp performed his function; brief and wandering were the replies made by his customer to the barber, very eloquent on the robbery, and especially grateful to Providence for the calamity. "Whomsoever has taken the guineas—always supposing they are taken—has done a service to the country," said Rasp "For my part, and I don't care who knows it, I hope they 'll live long and die happy with 'em. Pretty fellows they must be! Come to sell the Constitution; to rob us of our rights; and then sing out about thieves! What do you say, sir?" cried the barber, liberating his customer from his uneasy chair.

"Just so," said St. Giles, "I shouldn't wonder: to be sure."

"Why you look," said Rasp, marking the absent air of St. Giles, "you look as if you was looking a hundred miles away. You can't tell us what you see, can you?"

Now, St. Giles, had he been in communicative mood, might have interested the barber, making him a partaker of the vision that would reveal itself to his customer. St. Giles plainly beheld Tom Blast with the stolen guineas. Had he watched him staggering beneath the pillage, he had not been better assured of the evil doing. Again, he had marked the thief's face; it wore the smug, lackered look of a fortunate scoundrel: the light as of the stolen guineas flickered in his eyes, and his lips were puckered with inaudible whistling. St. Giles took little heed of the talkative

barber, but laying down the price of his yesterday's beard, quitted the shop. Anxiously, fearfully, he looked about him from the door. He stood, like a lost traveller fearful of the sudden leap of some wild beast. Blast was not in the street: he now avoided St. Giles; new evidence that the old ruffian was the robber. St. Giles hastily struck into the fields, that with less chance of interruption, he might ponder on the present difficulty. He was only known to young St. James as the vagabond of a prison; and, therefore, open to the heavier suspicion. If arrested,—how to account for himself? Should he at once boldly seek the young lord?—for as yet he had not seen him. Or should he at once turn his steps towards London?

His heart sank, and the sickness of death fell upon him, as again he saw himself beset by inevitable peril. Was it not folly, sheer, brute-like stupidity, in a doomed wretch like him, to yearn for innocent days, for honest bread? Was it not gross impudence in him to hope it—in him, so formed and cast upon the world to be its wrong, its misery, and disgrace? Why not go back to London, dash into guilt, and when the time came, die gallantly on the tree? Why not clap hands with Blast, and become with him, a human animal of prey? Such were the confused, the wretched thoughts that possessed St. Giles, as with feet of lead he crossed the fields. Divinely beautiful was the day! The heavens smiled peace and hope upon the earth, brimming with things of tenderness and beauty. The outcast paused at the winding river. Did his eye feed delightedly upon its brightness—was his ear solaced by its sound? No: he looked with a wild curiosity, as though he would look below—and he heard tongues talking from the stream—tongues calling him to rest.

"Ain't lost nothing?" cried a voice; and St. Giles, aroused, to his delight beheld Bright Jem.

"No; nothing," said St. Giles. "I was thinking though that I might lose something, and be all the richer for the loss. But the thought 's gone, now you 're come."

Jem looked like a man who catches half a meaning, and cares not to pursue the other half. So he said—"I thought, mayhap, when you left us in the churchyard, you 'd have come over to the Tub. Master Capstick said he knew you wouldn't, but I know he was sorry you didn't."

"I tell you what it is," said St. Giles, "I hadn't the heart."

"That 's the very reason you ought to ha' come to us. Master Capstick 's got heart enough for half-a-dozen."

"God bless him!" cried St. Giles.

"I 'll jine you in that, whenever you say it. But I can see by the look of you—why, your face is full on it—I can see, you 've

something to say. I'm afeard the world hasn't been as careful of you as if you 'd been an image of gold, eh? Come, lad"—and Jem laid his hand gently upon St. Giles's shoulder, and spoke tenderly as a woman—"Come, lad, let 's know all about it."

"You shall know all—you shall," and St. Giles seized Jem's hand, and with moistening eyes and choaking throat—it was such a happiness to see such looks and hear such words—shook the hand eagerly, tremblingly.

"There, now, good lad, take your time," cried Jem. "I 'm going to Master Kingcup, the schoolmaster; not above two mile away. And so we 'll gossip as we trudge. Jest over that style, and"—and Jem paused, with his looks directed towards a stunted oak some bow-shot from him. "I say"—he cried, pointing to a boy sleeping in the arms of the tree—"I say, that 's a London bird, perched there—I 'm sure on it."

Instantly St. Giles recognised his half-brother, the precocious Jingo. "You 're going to the good gentleman, you say, the schoolmaster?" cried St. Giles, animated as by a sudden flash of thought. "I 've a notion—I 'll tell you all about it—we 'll take that boy with us. Hallo! come down here!" cried St. Giles to the sleeper.

"What for?" said Jingo, stretching himself and yawning. "You 're no constable, and I sha'n't."

"He knows what a constable is, depend on 't," said Jem, shaking his head.

"Well, I 'm a coming," said the philosophic Jingo, observing that St. Giles was about to ascend—"I 'm a coming." And in a moment, the urchin dropt like an ape from branch to branch and fell to the earth. As he fell, a guinea rolled from his pocket.

"Where did you get this?" exclaimed St. Giles, picking up the coin.

Whereupon little Jingo bowed his arms, and in his shrillest treble, answered—"Found it."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The candidate for Liquorish has, it may be thought, been too long neglected in our attention to his agents, and their meaner creatures. Seemingly we have been unmindful of his lordship, but in reality not so. We felt more than satisfied that we had placed him, like a treasure in a temple, at Lazarus Hall. For

there was Doctor Gilead, the good genius of larder and cellar, big, perspiring with anxiety to assuage, by the most recondite and costly means, the hunger and thirst of his exalted guest. Had it been possible to purchase a live unicorn, its haunch would have smoked before young St. James; the sole phœnix would have been roasted in its spicery, and dished in its plumes; and Ganymede might have had any price of Doctor Gilead for peculated nectar. In the fulness of the Doctor's hospitality there lurked a grief that no new animal—no yet unheard-of tipple could be compassed. He must therefore—at last he was resigned to it—make the best of the good things of the earth such as they were; he, by the way, possessing the very best for the experiment. Mrs. Gilead, too, had her anxiety; though, it pains us to confess it, her husband—it is too common a fault, crime we should rather say—did not respond with all his heartstrings to the vibrating chords of his partner. But how rare is it to find a wedded man with a proper sympathy for the distresses of his wife! The elements may have suddenly conspired to spoil her bonnet—she may have broken her dearest bit of china—the cat may have run off with her gold-fish—and at that very moment, above all others, her husband will insult her with his philosophy. And so it was with the anxieties of Mrs. Gilead. She felt that, whilst young St. James lay pillowed under her roof, she was answerable for the sweetness, the soundness of his slumbers; nay, almost for the pleasantness of his dreams. She was wakeful herself in her tenderness for the repose of her guest. "I do hope his lordship will sleep," she said, twice and thrice to her wedded master.

"Bless the woman!" cried the Doctor, at the time perplexed with the thought of some possible novelty for the next day's dinner, "of course he'll sleep. Why not? We have no fleas, have we?"

"Fleas, Doctor Gilead! Don't insult me! Fleas in my beds!" and Mrs. Gilead spoke tremulously, as though hurt, wounded in her huswifery—the weakest place of the weakest sex. And Doctor Gilead knew there was not a flea in the house; but it was like the man—it was like the brotherhood at large—to suggest to a wife the probability of the most impossible annoyance. Of course, it was only said to hurt her.

Nor let us forget the Miss Gileads. For each, saying no syllable to the other, was sleepless with the thoughts of providing life-long bliss for the noble, the beautiful guest. How delightful to make him happy for the rest of his days, and how very advantageous to be a legal partner in the felicity. If eyes ever did dazzle—if lips ever did take man's heart from his bosom, like a stone from a

black cherry (we think that simile perfect), eyes and lips should do the double deed to-morrow.

And young St. James, in a deep sea of eider-down, took his rest; none the worse, it may be, that he knew not of the conspiracy working against his freedom. Three sets of hymeneal chains were almost all night long hammered at by three young ladies, and yet the unconscious victim slept; even as the culprit takes unbroken rest, whilst hammers fall upon the scaffold for to-morrow.

If the reader will pass the intentions of the young ladies as at least benevolently purposed, he must confess that we have for the last three chapters left young St. James most tenderly cared for. Sleeping and waking he has had the prettiest cares, the sweetest attentions, like a shower of rose-leaves, cast upon him. And now Monday morning was come. The morning of the day of nomination was arrived. A law-maker was to be made by the voice of a free people; a senator, without crack or flaw; a perfect crystal vessel of the state was to be blown by the breath of unbought man. Nature seemed to sympathise with the work; at least, such was the belief of Doctor Gilead, his imagination kindling somewhat with the occasion. He rose only a little later than the sparrows; and from the beauty, the enjoyment of out-door objects, took the happiest omens. A member was to be returned to Parliament. Certainly the lark never fluttered nearer heaven—never sang so hopefully. Such was Doctor Gilead's sweet belief; and rapt in it, he did not the next moment hear the voice of an ass in a distant meadow—gave no ear to his own geese gaggling near his barn. Happy the superstition that on such occasions will only listen to the lark!

Everybody appeared at breakfast with a face drest for triumph. "Had his lordship slept well?" asked Mrs. Gilead; and with voices that would melt the heart of a man, were the thing really soluble, each Miss Gilead put the same question, but with a manner that plainly said her peace of mind depended on an affirmative reply. His lordship had slept well. Each and all of the Miss Gileads were blest for their existence!

"How do you do, Mr. Folder?" asked his lordship, as that worthy man, with his old equable look, entered the breakfast parlour. Now, Mr. Folder had never looked better—never felt better. His calmness, his philosophy was astonishing, admirable; the more so, as it was his friend and not himself who had lost a treasure of gold. In few words, and in his own smiling way, Mr. Folder said he was charming.

"But where's Tangle? eh?—not left Tangle behind?" cried his lordship.

"No, no," said Folder, with a happy smile. "He preferred a walk across the fields."

"Poor fellow! he doesn't often get a bit of grass in London, I dare say," said the Doctor; who then turned to his lordship, and rubbing his hands, and laughing as at the enjoyment of a sweet secret, said, "It wouldn't do, my lord, to lose Tangle; no, no, we must take care of Tangle." Innocent Doctor Gilead! At that moment he thought the agent the happy keeper of thousands of metal birds of Paradise; and alack! they had made wings for themselves, and flown away. Had the Doctor known the condition of Tangle, what an abject, forlorn varlet would he have seemed in the offended eyes of his admirer!

Mr. Tangle was announced. He entered the room; his face galvanised into a smile. It was plain, at least to Folder, who knew all, that the agent had laboured so hard to get that smile into his countenance that it would be very difficult to dismiss it—it was so fixed, so very rigid. It seemed the hardest smile cut in the hardest oak.

"Quite well, I trust, Mr. Tangle? None the worse, I hope, for last night?" said young St. James, gaily.

Tangle's knees struck each other at his lordship's voice. Last night? Did his lordship, then, know of the robbery? Such was the first confusion of Tangle's thoughts; and he then remembered that his lordship doubtless hinted at the wine swallowed, and not at the gold carried away. Whereupon, Tangle declared that he was quite well—never better. And then he resolutely put down a rising groan.

"Nothing the worse for anything last night, I'll be bound, eh, Mr. Tangle?" cried Doctor Gilead, alive, as every man ought to be, to the reputation of his wine, when the wine, like the Roman's wife, is not to be suspected. "I should think not. And, Mr. Tangle, I've not forgotten the carp that pleased you so much. There's plenty in the pond; and we'll have some of the finest, I can tell you." At this moment the Doctor was summoned from the room; whilst new visitors continued to arrive, assembling to escort the noble candidate to a very modest fabric, largely christened as the Town Hall. Young St. James knew everybody—welcomed everybody. There was not a man present with whom he would not and could not have shared his heart; it was so unexpectedly large upon the happy occasion.

"Don't you wish, my lord, that your noble father the excellent Marquess was here to see your triumph?" exclaimed one of the artless Miss Gileads. Rosy ignorance! She knew not that, however the paternal heart might have yearned to be present, it was sternly checked by a strong sense of constitutional duty. For

the Marquess, as a peer of England, could not, must not, directly or indirectly seem to interfere in the election of a member of Parliament—in the free assertion of the people's choice. Therefore it was only permitted to the father, the peer, and the patriot to send his banker.

And still the visitors poured in; and as the crowd grew, every man looked more important, as though catching zeal and constancy of purpose from new comers. "The borough 's been in the family these thousand years," cried a spare, fibrous, thin-faced man, with a high piercing voice, "and the constitootion had better go to sleep at once if any nobody 's to come to represent us."

"Tell 'ee what, Muster Flay, we own't stand it," said a freeholder in a smock frock, that in its unspecked whiteness might have typified the purity of election. "We own't stand it. My father and his father—and hisn after hisn—all on 'em did vote for the family,—and when folks come to ax me for my vote agin 'em, —why, as I says to my wife, it 's like a flyin' in the face of Providunce."

"To be sure it is"—answered Flay—"it 's ungrateful; and more,—it 's unconstitootional."

"No, no, Muster Flay: the Blues have always paid me and mine very well"—

"Hush! Not so loud," said Flay, with his finger at his eloquent lip.

"Bless 'ee, everybody knows as everybody's paid," answered the clean-breasted voter.

"To be sure they do; nevertheless," observed Flay, "it isn't constitootional to know it. It 's what we call a fiction in the law; but you know nothing o' these things, Master Stump," said the barber, who then drew himself back a little to take a better look of the fine specimen of ignorance before him.

"What 's a fickshun?" asked Stump. "Somethin' o' use, I 'spose?"

"I believe you—the constitootion couldn't go on without it. Fiction in the constitootion is like the flour in a plum-pudding—it holds all the prime things in it together."

"I see," answered Stump, with a grin; "if they hadn't no fickshun, they 'd make a very pretty biling of it!"

And after this irreverent fashion, comparing the lofty uses and the various wisdom of the constitution to the ingredients of a Christmas pudding, did Flay, the Blue barber, and his pupil in the art of government, discourse amid the mob assembled in the grounds of Lazarus Hall; when a faint cheer, an ineffectual shout, rose from some of the mob gathered about a horseman arrived in haste, with special news. This intelligence was speedily conveyed to Doctor Gilead, whose face suddenly glowed like

stained glass, he was so delighted with the tidings. Making his way back to his lordship, the Doctor cried—"Joy, my Lord! Joy! Joy! The enemy won't stand! The Yellow's mounted the white feather! No contest, my lord—no contest! Three cheers gentlemen, for our member!" And Doctor Gilead, for awhile forgetful of the meekness of the pastor in the zeal of the patriot, sprang upon a chair, and loudly huzzaed. His note of rejoicing was responded to, but somehow not heartily. The assembly tried to look very delighted, very triumphant; yet, it was plain, they felt a latent annoyance. Was it that they were disappointed of the pleasing excitement of a hard-contested constitutional fight? Was it, too, that every man felt himself considerably lowered, not only in his self-estimation, but in the value that would otherwise have been set upon him by opposite buyers? It is a painful feeling to be at the tyrannous, the ignorant valuation of any one man; and doubtless, many of the electors of Liquorish shared in this annoyance, for now they might be bought at young St. James's own price. When a man does drive his principle, like his pig, to market, it must try the Christian spirit of the seller to find only a solitary buyer. The principle, like the pig, may be a very fine principle; a fine, healthy, thorough-going principle; and yet the one buyer, because the only one, may chaffer for it as though the goods were a very measly principle indeed. The man must sell; so there goes a principle for next to nothing: a principle that, with a full market, would have fetched any money. To sell a principle may be the pleasantest thing in the world, but to almost give it away is surely another matter.

In Mr. Tangle, the news excited mixed emotions. He rejoiced that the money would be less needed than had an opposing buyer been in the market: and then he felt doubly sad at the loss: for with the gold in his possession, and there being the less necessity for its wide expenditure, he might—he felt sure he could have done it somehow—yes, he might have levied a heavy per centage upon what remained. There would have been a larger body of metal for the experiment; and let this be said of him, Tangle always preferred such experiments on a grand scale. Thus Tangle, confused in soul, and downcast in demeanour, suffered himself to be led to one of the half-dozen carriages prepared for the procession to the Town Hall.

Shall we attempt a description of the mob in vehicles—the mob on horseback—and the mob on foot, departing from the rectory, bound on the solemn duty of making a fire-new senator? No: we will merely chronicle the touching truth that, as the mob moved on, they sent forth a cheer, that was shrilly answered

from the topmost windows of the rectory, whereat all sorts of maids, covered all over with blue ribands, screamed, and fluttered handkerchiefs and napkins in glad augury of triumph. The order of the rector for the profusest display of St. James's colours had been carried out with responding zeal by his retainers. Blue fluttered everywhere. The dairy-maid had decked Crumple's horns with blue, and the cow, as the maid averred, seemed very proud indeed of the badge; had she worn it in honour of her own son, then only a fortnight old, she could not have looked more complacent, happy. There was not a single ass belonging to the rectory that did not somewhere carry the colour; and we do assure the reader, very grave and very wise the asses looked under it. They seemed, as Jock the hind observed, to understand "the thing, like any Christian." A blue flag fluttered from the top of the rectory—and blue streamers from every out-house. Even the gilt weathercock—the fact somehow escaped the eye of the rector—bore at its four points a long, long strip of blue riband in honour of the political principles of the Blue candidate.

The mob, we say, cheered as they set forward from the rectory, and the men-servants and the maid-servants cheered again. The household gods of Lazarus Hall drew a long breath as relieved from the crowd and tumult of the mob that had hustled and confused them; and the solemn row of Ecclesiastical Fathers, standing in Church-militant file upon the library shelves, once more seemed to feel themselves the undisturbed possessors of their oaken home. Poor old fellows!—many of them, too, such wonderful hands at chopping one hair into little bundles of hairs, the better to make springes with—so many too, the Eloquent Dumb—the Great Forgotten—the Illustrious Dim—the Folio Furniture in calf or truly pastoral vellum,—for five-and-twenty years had stood upon the shelf, and no rude hand had ever touched them. They had been bought by Doctor Gilead, and made to stand before all men visiting the library, as vouchers for the learning of the rector. But when Scipio—of course, sir, you remember the story—when Scipio, by the fortune of war, was made the sometime guardian of a beautiful princess, Scipio himself was not more respectful of her charms, than was Doctor Gilead of the fascinations of the Fathers: he never knew them—never. We are aware that there may be vulgar souls who, judging from their simial selves, may doubt the continence of Scipio: we think this very likely; for sure we are that many folks, seeing the scholastic beauties possessed by Doctor Gilead, believed he must enjoy them: for the Doctor, like Scipio, never bragged of his abstinence. He, good soul, suffered men to think just what they

pleased: but this we know, although the Fathers were for five-and-twenty years in the power of Doctor Gilead, yet a Scipio in his way, he never—to speak scrupulously, like a matron—he never so much as laid his little finger on them.

Therefore, shortly before the arrival of his lordship, was it a great surprise to the Fathers to find themselves one morning taken from the shelves and opened. How stiff, poor fellows, were they all in the back! And no doubt, very much astounded was Origen, and Basil, and Theophylact, and Jerome and Tertullian, and other respectable Fathers, to find themselves dusted and thwacked as they, when in the flesh, were wont to dust and thwack their disputants; the man-servant and the maid-servant, otherwise intent, taking no more account of them than if they were old day-books and ledgers. In the vanity of their hearts—at least, in as much vanity as can belong to churchmen—they thought they were to be consulted and reverenced; in a word, made much of. And their owner, Doctor Gilead, did make much of them. He paid them the deepest devotion of which the good man was sensible; for he had them all packed off to be newly furbished and newly gilt; and there the dead Fathers of the Church stood glistening with living gold; and possibly feeling as uneasy in the splendour forced upon them as any bishop in a coach-and-four. There they were, like the cherubim, "in burning row;" doomed, however, to perpetual silence—perpetual neglect. Now and then the good Doctor would, of course, glance at them to satisfy himself that they stood in order: he would occasionally run his eye along the shelves, like an officer inspecting his regiment; but the Doctor no more thought of consulting some of those picked men of the army of martyrs, than would the very gorgeous colonel pause to gossip with the drummer. There they stood, a sort of divinity guard of honour. A body, very necessary to assert the importance of the rank of the great man in whose service they were called out, but on no account to be made familiar with.

And, we say, the tumultuous mob departed from the Hall and left the Fathers—with their newly-gilt backs glittering in the sun—to meditate on human turbulence and human vanity. Poor Fathers! twice were they doomed to be fed upon. They had been duly eaten in the grave, and now their body of divinity, embalmed, as they vainly thought it, in printer's ink, was drilled and consumed by that omnivorous library worm, of the birth and history of which entomologists have, we are sure of it, a very false and foolish notion. For it is our conviction that, as the worms that consume the body of the author are bred not in his grave dust, but in his own flesh, so do the worms—the only living

things that go entirely through some tomes—found in books, wholly originate and take their birth from the written matter of the volume. Hence, the quiddities, and *concetti*, and what Eve, once in her pouts with Adam (for the phrase is as old,) called the maggots of the brain, that abound in much controversial theology do, in process of time, become those little pestilent things that entirely eat up paper, print, and all. A warning this to men, if they would have their printed bodies last, to take care and avoid the aforesaid quiddities, and *concetti*, and maggots. For little knows the thoughtless beholder of many a tall, sturdy volume, what certain devastation is going on among its leaves. Many a controversialist who has shaken thunderbolts, but which, indeed, were nothing worse than little pebbles in a tin-pot—(by means of which, by the way, we have seen boys make asses gallop, pebbles jingled in a pot being thunder to asses,)—many a Jupiter of syllables in his day is, at this moment, being slowly but surely devoured, and that too by the vermicelli bred in what he deemed his own immortal thunder. Was there not, to give a very familiar instance, the famous Miianbettimartinius, who wrote a mighty folio to prove that there were no fleas in the Ark? Did he not stand upon his flea as a postdiluvian creation—stand upon it as the great pyramid on its base, for the bows and salaams of all posterity? And where and what is Miianbettimartinius now? A dead body of polemics. Now and then we see him handsomely bound upon a rector's, a bishop's shelf. Doctor Gilead had a very fine tall copy; but we can see through the binder's cuticle; our mental vision can pierce through calf-skin, and behold the worms at work. Pooh! the whole thing is as alive and wriggling as an angler's box of gentles.

But we must quit the Fathers, and fall in with the mob. We shall not attempt to count the number of votes upon horseback—the number of votes on foot—that preceded and followed, and on each side hemmed about the carriage of the noble candidate. Everybody, save Tangle, looked happy. And he, although he rode in a very fine coach, would insist upon looking as though he was taking a final journey in a cart; and although a young clergyman of excellent family, one in whose orthodoxy Doctor Gilead had great hopes for one of his daughters—although the young gentleman let off some capital jokes, brau-new from Cambridge, in Tangle's private ear, for his private delight—he, Tangle, did nothing but slightly bow, and look glassily about him, as though that very promising young clergyman was, at the moment, imparting the most solemn consolation; which, it is but hard justice to him, again to assure the reader, he was not. Tangle's soul was with his guineas. And it was as if

every guinea had a particular hold of his soul, and each guinea was flying a different way,—tearing and tugging at the poor soul in a thousand directions. The young clergyman was incessant in his attentions. "I say, old Death's-head"—thus familiar did the great cause in which both were riding make the man of Cam and the man of law,—"I say, look at that girl with cherry ribands."

Tangle was determined to put down this libertine familiarity at once and for ever. He, therefore, never deigning to look at either cherry lips or cherry ribands, observed, "Sir, I am a married man." Mr. Tangle believed that he had at once abashed, confounded his free acquaintance. He had uttered that, which he felt ought to silence any decent person: he had spoken his worst, and looked to be, at least, respected. He wished, however, to be very secure, and therefore repeated,—"Sir, I am a married man." Whereto the young clergyman responded, and let us do him justice, with evident sympathy—"Poor devil!"

The procession moved on—the music played—and there was not one of the mob who did not feel a huge interest in the very handsome young lord who was going up to Parliament to take especial care of all of them.—In the like way, that when the knight of old was armed, and about to go forth to slay the dragon that carried off men, virgins, and cattle, and continually breathed a brimstone blight upon the crops and herbage, making dumpish the heart of the farmer,—in the like way that he was attended by sage, grey-headed reverence, by youths and maidens, bearing garlands and green boughs, and accompanying him with shouts, and prayers, and loving looks,—so did the young lord St. James take his way to the hustings, that he might therefrom depart for Parliament, there to combat with and soundly drub the twenty dragons always ready to eat up everybody and everything, if not prevented by the one particular member. Young St. James would be the champion against the dragon taxation: he would keep the monster from the farmer's bacon—from the farmer's wife's eggs—from the farmer's daughter's butter: he would protect their rights; and the farmer, and farmer's wife, and farmer's daughter, all felt that they had a most dear and tender interest in that splendid young gentleman, who would do nothing but bow to them, and smile upon them, just for all the world as if he was not a morsel better than they.

"He 'll let 'em know what 's what when he gets among 'em," said an old countryman to Flay, who, that he might be as near as possible to the lord about to be made a law-maker, walked with his hand upon the carriage. "They 've had it all their own way long enough; he 'll make 'em look about 'em."

"The man for the constitootion. That 's plain with half an eye ; he 's born with it all in his head, like a cock with a comb," said Flay. "It 's in the family," continued the barber ; "in the family."

The procession halts at the Hall. We pass the cheering, the groaning of the opposite parties. It was plain, that it was already known there would be no contest ; whereupon dark and blank were the looks of the Yellows, and very loud and fierce their denunciations. The Blues, too, though they put a boldly happy face on the matter, were ill at ease. A sharp opposition would have given them great delight, inasmuch as their tried patriotism would have shone all the more effulgent for the test.

And now the solemn business is opened by Mr. Mayor, too oppressed by the greatness of the occasion, to suffer one word of his very eloquent address to be heard by the multitude ; who, no doubt, in gratitude, cheered uproariously.

The Reverend Doctor Gilead then stept forward ; and suddenly the crowd seemed to feel themselves at church, they were so hushed. The Doctor said that nothing but his long knowledge, his affection for his lordship, could have induced him to break from that privacy which they all knew was his greatest happiness. But he had a duty to perform ; a duty to his country, to them, and to himself. That duty was to propose the distinguished nobleman before them, as their legal and moral representative in Parliament.

And young St. James was duly proposed and seconded. "Is there no other candidate ?" asked the Mayor, with a conscious face that there was not.

"Yes," cried a voice ; and immediately a man stept forward, whilst the Yellows roared with triumph. "I have to propose," said the man,—and reader, that man was no other than Ebenezer Snipeton, husband of Clarissa Snipeton,—"I have to propose, as the representative of the borough of Liquorish, Matthew Capstick, Esq."

A shout of derision burst from the Blues. For a moment, the Yellows, taken by surprise, were silent : they then paid back the shout with shoutings vehement.

"Does anybody second Matthew Capstick ?" asked the Mayor, aghast.

"I does," cried Rasp ; and again the Yellows shouted.

The Reverend Doctor Gilead looked haughtily, contemptuously, at the farce acted about him. Nevertheless, he thought it necessary to demand a poll for young St. James ; the show of hands—as the astounded Mayor was compelled to own—being "decidedly in favour of Matthew Capstick, Esq."

CHAPTER XXV.

"Why you never mean to do it?" asked Bright Jem anxiously, sorrowfully.

"A man is wedded to his country, Jem; and being wedded, must listen to her voice," was the answer of Capstick.

It was nearly midnight, and the late muffin maker and his man sat alone in the Tub. The news of his probable election for Liquorish had fallen upon Capstick explosively. He had, in truth, been much startled, agitated by the tidings; but, the muffin-maker was a philosopher, and after a brief hour or two he had subdued the flesh-quakes of the merely modest man trembling at his own under-valuation, and sat—re-assured and calm, contemplating his possible appearance amidst the sages of the land, himself a sage—with the quiet resignation of a patriot. Capstick industriously essayed a look, a manner of monumental tranquillity. He smoked apparently, for all the world, like a common man; and yet—it did not escape the affectionate glance of Jem—yet did Capstick's eye now and then burn and glow with a new light, even as the tobacco, at the breath of the smoker, glowed through the embers. Rapidly was his heart enlarging with the good of the nation. Orations, to be uttered to the world at the proper season, were conceived in the muffin-maker's brain; and as he sat, like a pagan god, in a cloud of his own making, they already grew and grew, and he already felt for them the mysterious love of the parent towards the unborn. Already his ears rang with the shoutings of an instructed, a delighted senate. His heart beat thick with the thought of Magna Charta, and the tremendous uses he would yet make of that sublime text. With no hope, no thought of Parliament, it had been the pride of the muffin-maker to despise the world and its doings; a hopeless world, overstocked with fools and knaves, altogether unworthy of the consideration of a philosophic mind. And now, with the chance of becoming a senator, Capstick felt a sudden charity for the universe. After all, it was a universe not to be neglected. And for the men and women inhabiting it—poor two-legged emmets!—they must not be suffered to go to ruin their own perverse way. He would, therefore, go to Parliament and save them.

Now, when a man has once for all determined upon a magnanimous line of conduct, he cannot but for the time look the better, the bigger, for the resolution. It is thus in all cases. For

instance, when a virgin, with lowered lids and lips trembling at their own courage, drops the "yes" that is to make a man beatific for the term of his natural existence—a "yes" at which all the wedding-rings in all the goldsmiths' shops sympathetically vibrate —she, the virgin, looks as she never before looked in her life; sublimated, glorified, with a halo of beauty about her; a halo catching light from her liquid eyes, and rosy, burning face. And when, too, the widow, with a sweet audacity, facing the mischief, man, as an old soldier faces a cannon, says "yes," tolling the monosyllable shortly, boldly as a bell tolls one—she, too, expands a little—just a little, with the thought, the good determined upon, —she, too, has her halo, though certainly of a dimmer kind; just a little dulled, like a second-hand ring. So true it is, that magnanimity has an expansive, a decorative quality. And so when Capstick, for a moment, felt himself a member of Parliament, he felt for the time his waistcoat much too small for him. In the like way that when, stirred by great emotions, the female heart takes a sudden shoot, it is sometimes necessary to cut the stay-lace to allow for the growth.

And Capstick sat enlarged by his own thoughts; with the ears of his soul up-pricked—for souls have ears, and at times pretty long ones—as though listening for the trumpets that should sound a blast for his triumph. But Bright Jem had a heavy, a dolorous expression of the divine countenance of man. His master was in danger of being made a member of Parliament. He was, at that moment, in the imminent peril of being taken from rustic delights, from the sweet, the flowery leisure of the country, to be turned into a maker of laws. His condition weighed heavily upon the sense of his faithful, his affectionate servant: who gazed upon him as Pylades would have regarded Orestes, had dear Orestes been sentenced to the pillory. Capstick already felt himself in the House of Commons, and smiled through his own smoke, as he thought of one of the hundred speeches he would make, and the cheers that would celebrate its delivery; and Bright Jem only thought of the unsavoury missiles to be hurled at his friend in the hour of his trial.

"A man is wedded to his country, Jem," repeated Capstick, with a growing love for the assertion.

"His country! Why, you don't call Liquorish your country, do you? Besides, what does the country know about you, 'xcept your muffins: if the country hasn't quite forgot them by this time? If you are made a member of Parliament—heaven preserve you, says I—you 'll only be made out of spite and malice," cried James.

Mr. Capstick took his pipe wide away from his mouth, and

began what would doubtless have been a very eloquent speech. Bright Jem, however, suffered him to get no further than—"The choice of the people, Jem."

"The people! The choice of the guineas, that 's it, Mr. Capstick. A member for Liquorish! Well, they might as well make a little image of the golden calf over agin, and send that to Parliament: for that 's the people 's choice hereabouts. Why, you must know, that it 's for no love of you that Snipeton—as they call him—put you up. To carry his pint agin his young lordship—for there 's some sore atween 'em—he 'd send a chimbly-sweeper to Parliament without washing him."

"Impossible!" cried Capstick, with very considerable dignity.

"Certain of it," insisted Jem, "else why, may I be so bold to ask, should he pitch upon you?"

"I am not exactly a chimney-sweeper, Mr. James; not exactly," observed Capstick, majestically.

"A course not: a good way from it: but you know what I mean, dont't you?" said Jem.

"It is no matter. Mr. Snipeton has very briefly satisfied me of the purity, the patriotism of his intentions, and—good night Mr. James," and Capstick rose. "I must rise early tomorrow."

"Don't say Mr. James, then: it 's a putting a stone in my pillow that I couldn't sleep on, seeing I 'm not used to it. God bless you, sir—good night," and Jem held forth his hand.

"Good night, Jem," said Capstick, taking Jem's hand. "And mind, to-morrow, early, Jem—very early, Jem."

Almost at dawn Jem was in the garden, digging, digging as though he would get rid of thought. At times, very savagely would he plunge the spade into the earth, as though it relieved him. And then he groaned—hummed—and sighed. And the morning broke gloriously; and the birds sang and whistled; and the flowers came laughing out in the sunshine. The summer earth, one wide altar, steamed with sweetest incense to heaven.

Jem had laboured for a couple of hours before Capstick joined him in the garden. "Why, Jem, you 've done a full half-day's work already," said the candidate for Liquorish.

"Somehow I couldn't rest: and when I did sleep, I had nothing but nasty dreams. If I didn't dream you was taken to the Tower for pulling the Speaker's nose—and I know your temper, sir—nothing more likely—I wish I may die. Never had such a clear, clean dream in all my life. It was all made out so."

"And what did they do with me at the Tower?" asked Capstick, a little tickled by the importance of the imprisonment.

"Why they chopped your head off as clean as a sheep's," said

Jem, earnestly. "I saw 'em do it; heard the chopper go right through bone, gristle, and all." Capstick clapt his hand to his neck, then suddenly took it away again, and shook his head and smiled. Jem continued. "They chopped it off, and I heard it fall from the block with a bump. And after that they cut you into four quarters to be hung up for an example."

"Ha! ha! and that 's the worst they did," cried Capstick; "there was an end, then?"

"No there wasn't," said Jem; "for I dreamt that they made me pack up one of the quarters, like spring-lamb, and carry it to your old muffin-shop, and hang it jest over the door atween the two windows, as a warning to all traitors. And I hung it up. And then I dreamt I sat down on the door-step, and it was as much as ever I could do to keep the birds from pecking at you, for all I did nothing but pelt 'em with dollars."

"Very extravagant," said Capstick, who added gravely, laying his hand very tenderly upon Jem's shoulder, "when the time really comes, don't throw away silver; first try penny pieces." Jem shook his head: he could not relish the humour of the economy.

"If, now, they really should make a member of parliament of you,"—Jem shuddered at the notion as at the thought of some nauseous drug—"you don't mean to say you 'll leave the Tub, the garden and all?"

"The voice of the country, Jem, must be obeyed. We 'll come down here, and recruit ourselves when the House is prorogued. We shall enjoy it all the more for the work of the session." Capstick already spoke like a member.

"Well, I know somethin' of parliament, for I knew poor Sam Chilterns, the linkman, as was killed by the late hours. He used to tell me a good deal about it. Whatever pleasure you can have, to go and sit steaming among a mob of folks—and hearing speeches and sums of figures that you don't know nothing about—and never opening your own mouth"—

"Never think it, Jem," cried Capstick, "I shall speak, and very often—very often."

"The Lord help you!" exclaimed Jem, amazed at such determination. "At your time of life, too!"

"That 's it, Jem. Twenty, ten, years ago, I shouldn't have been ripe for it. Really great men are of slow growth; I feel that I have just now reached my prime, and my country shall have it. You don't know—how should you?—what I may meet with in parliament."

"A little on it," said Jem. "You 'll meet with bad hours and noisy company; and you 'll turn night into day, and day into

night, and so do no good with neither one nor the other. Meet! Will you meet with any such company as you leave? I should like to know that."

"Why, what company do I leave?" asked Capstick coldly, and with dignity.

"Why, the company about you," cried Jem, and Capstick shortly coughed. "Look at 'em: will you meet with anything like them roses, jest opening their precious mouths, and talking to you in their own way—for how often you 've said they do talk, if people will only have the sense to understand 'em! You 'll go to court, perhaps; and, if you do, will you meet with finer velvet than 's in them heartsease? will you see any diamonds"—and here Jem struck a bush with his spade, and the dew-drops in a silver shower trembled and fell from it—"any diamonds brighter and wholesomer than them? Will you hear anything like that in parliament?"—cried Jem, emphatically, and he pointed upwards to a lark singing in the high heavens.

"These things are to be enjoyed in their due season; when, as I say, the House is prorogued," said Capstick.

"And what 's to become of all the animals that I thought you so fond on? They 'll none on 'em come to good when you 're away. There 's them beautiful bees — sensible things! — you don't think they 'll have the heart to go on working, working, when you 're wasting your time in the House of Commons? And you 'll go and make laws! Ha! We sha'n't have no luck after that. If the bantam hen that 's sitting doesn't addle all her eggs, I know nothing of bantams. Why, how,"—and Jem spoke in a saddened tone—"how in six weeks do you think you 'll look?"

"Look! how should I look?" cried Capstick, bending his brows.

"Why, you 'll look like a act of parliament; and a precious old act, too; all parchment like, with black marks. And you 'll go to bed when the sun gets up; and instead of meeting him, as you do now, with a head as clear as spring water—and looking at him, all health and comfort—and walking about hearing the birds and smelling the cows, the flowers and the fresh earth—why, you 'll be slinking home to your bed with no heart to stare in the sun's face—and your precious head will seem biling with a lot of talk; all wobbling with speeches you can make nothin' on—and you 'll soon wish yourself a mushroom, a toadstool, anything to be well in the country agin."

"Jem," said Capstick, "you mean well; but you 're an enthusiast."

"You may call me what names you like," said Jem, very resignedly, "but you 'll never be happy away from the Tub."

"You 'll lay the breakfast," observed Capstick, peremptorily ending the conversation as he turned from the garden to the house, whilst Jem—as if he had a new quarrel with the soil—dug his spade into the earth with increased energy.

In a few minutes a hen broke out into the customary proclamation of a new egg.—"Well, I know," cried Jem, pettishly, "I know: you 're like a good many people, you are; can't even give poor folks an egg without telling all the world about it. Humph! he may as well have 'em fresh while he can;" and Jem took his way to the hen-roost—"poor soul! he 'll get nothing fresh when he 's a member of parliament."

In very dumpish spirits did Jem prepare the breakfast. But when he saw Capstick, habited in his very best, issue from his chamber, Jem groaned as though he looked upon a victim arrayed for the sacrifice. Capstick would not hear the note of tribulation, but observed—"You 'll go with me, Jem."

"I 'd rather not," said Jem; "but I 'spose I must go in the mob, to see as nobody pelts you. Well! I wonder what any Jew will give for that coat when you come home. But I 'spose it 's all right. People put their best on when they 're hanged, and why shouldn't you? All right, o' course."

Capstick managed to laugh, and tried to eat his breakfast with even more than customary relish—but it would not do: he had no appetite. He felt himself on the verge of greatness. And his heart was so big it left him no stomach. Suddenly was heard the sound of distant music. "Heaven save you!" cried Jem; "they 're coming after you."

"Don't be a fool," said the philosophic Capstick, and the music and the shouting seemed to enter his calm bosom like flame, for he suddenly observed, "It 's very warm to-day, Jem."

"Nothing to what it will be," said Jem. "Here they come. Afore it 's too late, will you hide under the bed, and I 'll say you 're out?" Jem rapidly put the proposal as a last desperate resource.

"Don't be a fool," again cried Capstick, and with increased vehemence. "Open the door."

"It 's all over—too late," groaned Jem, and almost immediately the music came clanging to the window, and the mob huzzaed, and Rasp, and others of Capstick's committee, filled the cottage.

"Hurrah!" cried Rasp, "three cheers for Capstick! Capstick and the Constitution!" and the mob roared in obedience "Now, Mr. Capstick; all right, I can tell you. His lordship hasn't a toe to stand upon—not a single toe. This blessed night you 'll sleep member for Liquorish! Down with the Blues! The Constitution and Capstick! Hurrah! Why, Jem"—

cried the barber, suddenly astounded—"you hav'n't got no colour. Here 's one."

"Well, if I must make myself a canary," cried Jem, and he took the proffered riband, and shook his head.

"Now, then, strike up, and three more cheers for Capstick and the Constitution," roared Rasp. The trumpets sounded—the drums beat—the mob roared,—and amidst the hubbub, Capstick suffered himself to be carried off by the committee to one of the three carriages drawn up at the end of the lane, whilst Bright Jem, as though he walked at a funeral, pensively followed.—In a few moments the line was formed; and musicians and mob, taking new breath, gave loudest utterance to their several instruments. And Capstick, the philosopher, smiled and bowed about him with all the easy grace of an old candidate. Bright Jem gazed at him with astonishment. Could it be possible that that smiling, courteous, bending man was the rigid muffin-maker? After that, there was nothing true, nothing real in humanity. At once, Jem gave up the world.

The procession reached the Town Hall. Hurrahs and hootings met Capstick; who felt warm and cold at the salutations. It was plain, however, that Capstick and the Constitution—as Rasp would couple them—must triumph. The great confidence in young St. James had, somehow, been severely shaken. It was known even to the little children of the borough that the mysterious chest of gold had been carried off; and as the customary donation to the electors was not forthcoming, it was believed that young St. James would rashly trust to purity of election. Tangle, secure in his belief that there would be no opposition to his lordship, had said no word of the robbery; hence, he had suffered very valuable time to be lost—time that had been improved to the utmost by the agents of Snipeton, who, though he scarcely appeared himself, laboured by means of his mercenaries, with all the ardour that hatred and gold could supply in the cause. When, however, it became certain that his lordship would be opposed, Tangle felt the dire necessity—dire, indeed—of telling the truth. And then he felt he had not the courage to carry him through so unusual a task. Whereupon, he sneaked to his inn, ordered a post-chaise, placed himself and portmanteau therein, and late at night secretly drove towards London. Ere, however, he departed, he left a letter for the noble candidate. We give a correct copy.

"My Lord,—Deeply, indeed, do I regret that a circumstance—a tender circumstance—to which it is needless more particularly to allude (for what—what right have I, at such a time, to force

my domestic sorrows on your lordship's attention ?)—a tender circumstance, I say, compels my immediate attendance in London. You may judge of the importance of the event from the very fact that, at such a time, it can sever me from your lordship. I leave you, however, in the full assurance of your triumph—in the full belief that parliament, which has received so many ornaments from your noble house, has yet to obtain an unparalleled lustre in the genius of your lordship. With the profoundest respect, I am your lordship's most devoted servant, "Luke Tangle."

"P.S.—We are all, in this mortal world, liable to accidents. My good friend, Mr. Folder, will inform your lordship of a circumstance that has given me much pain: a circumstance, however, that when I shall have the honour of next meeting your lordship, I doubt not I shall be able most fully to explain to your lordship's most perfect satisfaction."

"There is great villany in this,—great villany, my lord," said Doctor Gilead, possessed of the contents of the letter—"but it is n't so much the money that 's lost; that may be remedied—it 's the time, the precious time. There is no doubt that the other side have taken the most unprincipled advantage of the calamity, and have bribed right and left. Nevertheless, we must not despair. No; certainly not. We must look the difficulty in the face like men, my lord—like men." The Doctor, too, spoke like one determined to fight to the last minute, and the last guinea. And the Doctor was not merely a man of words. No. With a fine decision of character, he immediately drew a cheque for a much larger amount than was ever dreamt of by all the apostles, and confiding it to a trusty servant, he shortly, but emphatically, said to him—"Gold." The man smilingly acknowledged the magic of that potent monosyllable, and departed blithely on his errand. Nevertheless, there was a strong sense of honour in the hearts of the majority of the patriots of Liquorish; for although some took double bribes—although some suffered themselves to be gilt like weather-vanes, on both sides—the greater number remained true to the first purchaser. It was the boast—the consolation that made so many of the Yellows walk upright through the world—that they stuck to their first bargain. The double fee would have been welcome, to be sure; but as some of them touchingly observed, they had characters to take care of. Besides, the same candidate might come again.

"Can you have any notion of the cause of the motives of this man, Snipeton?" asked Doctor Gilead of young St. James, who slightly coloured at the home question. "Why should he have started a candidate?"

"Possibly — I can't tell — but I say possibly he has strong political feelings. But, 'tis no matter, 'twill only add to the excitement: at the most, 'twill only be a joke. A muffin-maker sitting for Liquorish! For our borough! 'Tis too ridiculous to imagine," and young St. James laughed.

"A very contemptible person, certainly," said Doctor Gilead; "nevertheless, he's twenty a-head of your lordship, and as there is not above another hour for polling, and we know the number of votes, matters do look a little desperate." Such was the opinion of Doctor Gilead, very dolorously pronounced at an advanced period of the day; and young St. James—although he had combated the notion like a man and a lord—began to give ground: it no longer seemed to him among the impossibilities of the world that the family borough of Liquorish might be usurped by a muffin-maker. And then St. James—thinking of Clarissa—meditated a terrible revenge upon her husband.

In the meanwhile, the contest raged with every variety of noise and violence consequent upon the making of a member of parliament. Songs were sung;—how the poet was so suddenly found, we know not; but discovered, he was potently inspired by ready gold and ale, and in no time enshrined the robbery of the money-box in verse. Every verse, like a wasp, had a sting at the end of it, aimed at the corruption of the Blues. The concluding stanza, too, breathed an ardent wish for the future prosperity and happiness of the thief—an expression of kindness that Tom Blast, as he mingled among the mob, received with the silence of modesty. Tom's only regret was that Jingo, his own child, had not been entrusted with the ballad, as the melody and the sentiment of the song were beautifully adapted to the voice and intelligence of the young minstrel. Besides, there would have been something droll—very droll, a matter to be chuckled over with private friends—had Jingo chaunted the satirical lament for the stolen gold; he being, above all others, peculiarly fitted for the melodious task. And where could he be?—once or twice thought the father, and then the paternal anxiety was merged in the deep interest of the hour; for Tom Blast with all his might roared and cheered and hooted in the cause of the Yellows. Much, we think, would it have abated the patriotic zeal of Capstick, had he known how vociferously he was lauded by the thief of Hog Lane. But at such a time, applause must not be too curiously analysed.

And now both parties began to number minutes. A quarter of an hour, and the poll would close. The Blues had for the past twenty minutes rallied; and Doctor Gilead rubbed his hands and declared that, in spite of the corrupt practices of the Yellows, in

spite of the soul-buying bribery that had been resorted to by unchristian men, the rightful seat of St. James would not be usurped by a muffin-maker. Poor Jem hung about the Committee-rooms, and secretly exulted when Capstick receded; as secretly mourned when he advanced. At length the final numbers were exhibited; and to the joy of the Yellows, the despair of the Blues, and to the particular misery of Jem himself, Matthew Capstick, Esq., was declared ten votes a-head of his opponent!

"Three cheers for Capstick, our member," cried Rasp from the window of the Yellow Committee-room. "Three cheers for Capstick and the Constitution!"

"Give it him," cried Flay from an opposite house, and the obedient loyal mob of Blues discharged a volley of mud and stones and other constitutional missiles in use on such glorious occasions. Crash went the windows; and, on the instant, the two factions in the street were engaged in a general fight; all moving, as they combated, towards the Town Hall, already beset by a roaring mob.

A few minutes, and Mr. Capstick appeared. Whereupon, the high bailiff declared him duly elected a knight burgess, and buckled the sword about him—the sword with which, by a pretty fiction, the knight was to defend the borough of Liquorish from all sorts of wrong. Capstick, with the weapon at his thigh, advanced with great dignity; for a time regardless of the showers of eggs and potatoes that, from the liberal hands of the Blues, immediately greeted him. The young Lord St. James—how Snipeton leered at him!—also appeared on the hustings, and accidentally received full in his face an egg, certainly intended for the visage of the successful candidate. It was plain, too, that Capstick thought as much, for he turned, and taking out his pocket-handkerchief, advanced to his lordship, and in the politest manner observed,—"My lord, I have no doubt that egg was intended to be my property: will you therefore permit me to reclaim my own?"—and saying this, Capstick with his white kerchief removed the offensive matter from his lordship's face, whilst the crowd—touched by the courtesy of the new member—laughed and cheered uproariously.

Mr. Capstick then advanced to the front of the hustings. At the same moment a potato fell short of him, near his foot. Whereupon the member drew his sword, and running it into the potato, held it up to the mob. Another laugh—another cheer greeted the action. "Silence! he 's a rum 'un—hear him!" was the cry, and in less than ten minutes the new member was permitted to proceed. Whereupon he said:

"Gentlemen—for gentlemen in a mob are always known by

their eggs and potatoes—I should, indeed, be unworthy of the honour you have placed and showered upon me, did I in any way complain of the manner in which you have exercised the privileges I see lying about me. I am aware, gentlemen, that it is the free birthright of Englishmen—and may they never forget it!—to pelt any man who may offer himself for the honour of representing them in Parliament. It is right that it should be so. For how unfit must be the man for the duties of his office—for the trials that in the House of Commons he must undergo—if he cannot, properly and respectfully, receive at the hands of an enlightened constituency any quantity of mud, any number of eggs or potatoes. I should hold myself a traitor to the trust reposed in me, did I at this moment of triumph object to either your eggs or your potatoes." (Very loud cheering; with a cry of "You 're the sort for us.") "No, gentlemen, I look upon eggs and potatoes as, I may say, the corner-stones of the Constitution." ("Three cheers for the Constitution," roared Rasp, and the Yellows obediently bellowed.) "Nevertheless, permit me to say this much. Feeling the necessity that you should always exercise for yourselves the right of pelting your candidates with eggs and potatoes—permit me to observe that I do not think the sacred cause of liberty will be endangered, that I do not believe the basis of the Constitution will be in the smallest degree shaken, if upon all future elections, when you shall be called upon to exercise the high prerogative of pelting your candidates, you select eggs that are sweet, and first mash your potatoes."

Laughter and loud cheers attested the reasonableness of the proposition. When silence was restored, young Lord St. James stood forward. His rival, he said, was for a time nominally their candidate. A petition to the House of Commons would, however, speedily send him back to his proper obscurity. His lordship was prepared to prove the grossest bribery——

"The box of guineas!"—"Who stole the gold?" was shouted from the mob, and Tom Blast himself boldly halloed—"Who stole the guineas?"

Doctor Gilead stept forward. "My friends," he said, "it is true that a box of money was stolen—but, my friends, you will rejoice with me to learn that the box is recovered."

"Gammon!" cried Blast wildly.

"The thief or thieves had cast the box into my fish-pond; but I have just been informed that on dragging the pond for carp—I had given the order before I quitted home—the box has been found! Three cheers, my friends!"

Blast groaned and the Blues huzzaed.

The ceremony of chairing was duly performed, Bright Jem

witnessing the triumph with a heavy heart: but Matthew Capstick, Esq., M.P., (he had been duly qualified by Snipeton,) as he was paraded along the streets of Liquorish had no wish ungratified —yes, there was one, a little one. It was merely that the late Mrs. Capstick could, for a very brief time, look up from her grave and see her elected husband in his moment of glory!

CHAPTER XXVI.

It is fit we now explain a few matters of the past for the better apprehension of the future. Let us therefore gossip five minutes. Let us pause awhile in this green lane—it is scarcely half-a-mile from the Town Hall of Liquorish,—ere mounting Pen, our familiar hippogriff, with you, sir, on the crupper, we take a flight and in a thought descend upon the mud of London. The sweet breath of the season should open hearts, as it uncloses myriads of buds and blossoms. So, let us sit upon this tree-trunk—this elm, felled and lopped in December. Stripped, maimed, and overthrown, a few of its twigs are dotted with green leaves; spring still working within it, like hope in the conquered brave.

Is not this an escape from the scuffling and braying of immortal man, moved by the feelings and the guineas of an election? What a very decent, quiet fellow is Brown! And Jones is a civil, peaceable creature! And Robinson, too, a man of gentle bearing! Yet multiply the three by one, two, three hundred. Let there be a mob of Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons, and then how often—made up of individual decency, and quietude, and gentleness—is there a raving, roaring, bullying multitude? The individual Adam sets aside his dignity, as a boxer strips for the fight; and whether the thing to be seen is a lord mayor's coach, fireworks, or a zany on a river, goose-paddled in a washing-tub, the sons of Adam will throng to the sight, and fight and scream for vantage-ground, with a violence that would shame any colony of monkeys, clawing and jabbering for stolen sugar-cane. Sweet, then, is it to the philosopher to moralise upon the hubbub and the jostling crowd. He pities the madness of the multitude, and respects the serenity of his own soul: the more so, if looking from a window, his own toes are untrodden, and his own coat-tails untorn.

And so, reader, let us breathe awhile in this green solitude—if, indeed, it be a solitude. For who shall count the little eye-like flowers peeping at us from the hedges—looking up from the sward in our face, openly as loving innocence? A solitude! What a

world of grasses do we tread upon, a world so crowded and humming with insect citizens! If only one turn of the peg we would let down our pride—of all the heart-strings the bass and grumbling one—we might compare many of these children, fathers, and grandfathers of a day with the two-legged kings of creation, the biped majesties of threescore years and ten. We might watch their little runnings to and from their hoards; their painful climbings to the very needle point of some tall blade of grass; watch them and smile, even as the angels, at their pleasant leisure watch and smile at you, Grubbings, when you go to the Bank and add to your sweet salvation there, the balance: smile, as at poor Superbus when, climbing and climbing, he rose to great Gold Stick, and kept it twenty years,—to angelic computation just twenty throbbings of a fevered heart. Surely, there is not an insect that we might not couple with an acquaintance. Here, in this little, trim sobriety, is our quaker friend, Placens; and here, in this butterfly, tipsy with its first-day's wings, is Polly, foolish Polly, who cannot consent to see the world, unless she sees it in her finest clothes. And so, looking at a piece of turf, no bigger than a lark's foot-stool, we may people it with friends and world acquaintance.

Is this solitude? And the blackbird, with his notes of melted honey, winds and whistles—no. Solitude? The jay, whose voice is a continual dissent, grates—no. Solitude? And the household rook swims upward in the air, and with homeward caw, awakens busy thoughts of life, of the day's cares and the day's necessities. The earth has no place of solitude. Not a rood of the wilderness that is not thronged and eloquent with crowds and voices, communing with the spirit of man; endowed by such communion with a knowledge, whose double fruit is divinest hope and meekest humility.

So once more to our story: once more to consider the doings of men. They are not to be thought of with less charity for this gossip in a green lane. Nay, try it, reader, on your own account. Say that you have a small wrong at your heart; say, that in your bosom you nurse a pet injury like a pet snake. Well, bring it here, away from the brick-and-mortar world; see the innocent beauty spread around you; the sunny heavens smiling protecting love upon you; listen to the harmonies breathing about you; and then say, is not this immortal injury of yours a wretched thing, a moral fungus, of no more account than a mildewed toad-stool? Of course. You are abashed by omnipotent benevolence into charity: and you forgive the wrong you have received from man, in your deep gratitude to God.

Nevertheless, there are natures hardly susceptible of such

influence. There are folks who would take their smallest wrongs with them into Paradise. Go where they will, they carry with them a travelling-case of injuries.

And wrongs, naturally enough, bring us back to Ebenezer Snipeton. It was his trade to lend money: nevertheless, he was not a man who suffered business to entirely absorb his pleasure. Hence, when he discovered that the patriot who, purely for the sake of his country, was to snatch Liquorish from young St. James, thought better of the rashness, refusing at the last moment to save the nation,—he, Ebenezer, treated himself to a costly but delicious enjoyment. And he—it was thus he pondered—he could afford it. He was a thrifty, saving man. He dallied not with common temptations. He wasted no money upon luxurious housekeeping; and for his wife, no nun ever spent less with the milliner. He took care of that. Well, as the homely proverb goes, it is a poor heart that never rejoices; and therefore Ebenezer Snipeton, temperate, self-denying in all other expensive enjoyments, was resolved, for once in his days, to purchase for himself a handsome piece of revenge. Determined upon a treat, he cared not for its cost. He would carry Capstick into Parliament, though in a chariot of solid gold. The young lord had dared to look upon Clarissa. The creature, a part of himself; whose youth and beauty, belonging to him, seemed to him a better assurance against decay and death. He had bought her for his lawful wife, and Holy Church had written the receipt. Nevertheless, that smooth-faced smiling lord—he, too, to whom the good old husband in the embracing philanthropy of a hundred per cent. had lent ready gold, to be paid back, post-obit fashion, on a father's coffin-lid—he, the young, handsome, profligate St. James, with no more reverence for the sanctity of marriage than has a school-boy for an orchard fence, he—it was plain—would carry off that mated bird! This one thought parched the old man as with a fever: waking, it consumed him; and he would start from his sleep, as though—such was his worded fancy—an adder stirred in his night-cap. Therefore he would not stint himself in his feast of vengeance. And therefore the freeholders were bought at their own price,—and they proved how dearly they valued a vote,—and Capstick, the muffin-maker, conquered the son of a marquis. People averred that the new member owed his elevation to the fiercest malice; but he, misanthrope as he was, had now and then his holiday notions of humanity, and did not to the full believe the scandal. No: though he did not confess it to himself, it was plain that his neighbours—at least the more thoughtful of them—believed in his powers of statesmanship; it was their wish, their one hope, that he should represent them; and though

he himself cared not a straw for the honour, it would have seemed ungracious to refuse. And so he quitted the Tub, and Bright Jem went heavily along with him to London. "I shall be quite the simple Roman in this business," said Capstick. "I feel myself very like Cincinnatus taken from turnips." "Without goin' to that Parliament, I only wish you was well among 'em agin," interrupted Jem. "And therefore," continued the senator, "I shall lodge humbly." And Capstick kept his word; for he hired a three-pair floor and an attic in Long Acre; and having purchased a framed and glazed copy of Magna Charta to hang over the chimney-piece, he began very deeply to consider his manifold duties as Member of Parliament.

With varying feelings St. Giles had watched the progress of the election. He had—it was his duty—shouted and bellowed for St. James. Nevertheless, the final prosperity of the muffin-man, his early benefactor, scarcely displeased him. Again, too, he thought that, should the young lord refuse to employ him—for he had still been baulked in his endeavour to see St. James—the new member for Liquorish would need new attendants to illustrate his dignity. And Bright Jem had, of course, revealed to Capstick all the transport's story; for the felon had made a clean breast of his mystery to Jem, on their way to Kingcup, the schoolmaster. And so, the election revel over, with a lightened heart St. Giles set out for London. Should St. James fail him, he was sure of Capstick.

If human misery demand human sympathy, the condition of Tom Blast is not to be despised. It is our trust that the reader followed him when, oppressed by the weight of gold, he tripped and staggered from the Olive Branch, and gasped and sweated as he reached the field, wherein he solaced his fatigue with the secret thought of future fortune bringing future reformation. It was with this strengthening impulse that he flung the iron box, gold-crammed, into the middle of a pond. There it lay, like one of Solomon's brazen kettles in the sea, containing a tremendous genius —an all-potent magician, when once released to work among men. And Tom would go to London, and in a few days, when Liquorish had subsided from its patriotic intoxication to its old sobriety, he would return with some trusty fellow-labourer in the world's hard ways, and angle for the box. Unhappy, fated Blast! He had flung his gold-fish into Doctor Gilead's pond. He had enriched the rector's waters with uncounted guineas. Next, of course, to "the fishpools in Heshbon," the Doctor loved that pond, for it contained carp of astonishing size and intelligence. Often would the Doctor seek the waters, and whilst feeding their tenants—tenants-at-will—delight himself with their docility and dimensions.

It was pretty, now to contemplate them in the pond, and now to fancy them in the dish. The Doctor knew the value, the pleasure of exercising the imagination; and thus made his carp equally ministrant to his immortal and his abdominal powers. Well, the pond was to be dragged for the election dinner, and the net becoming entangled with the box—but the Doctor has already revealed the happy accident. Tom Blast felt himself a blighted man. It was always his way. Any other thief would have hidden the goods in any other pond: but somehow or the other, the clergy had always been his misfortune. It was no use to struggle with fate: he was doomed to bad luck. And when, too, he had made up his mind to such a quiet, comfortable life; when he had resolved upon respectability and an honest course; he felt his heart softened—it was too bad. Nothing was left for him but to return to the thief's wide home, London. He, poor fellow! could have subdued his desires to live even at Liquorish; for tobacco and gin were there; but, he knew it, in such a place he must starve. With the loss of the box came a quickened recollection of the loss of Jingo. Where could the child have wandered? Blast had learned that Tangle had been despoiled of his purse on the night of the greater robbery. Now, though the paternal heart was pleased to believe that such theft was the work of the boy, the father was nevertheless saddened at the child's disobedience. If it was the boy's duty to rob, it was no less his duty to bring the stolen goods to his affectionate parent. In prosperity the human heart is less sensible of slight. Blast, whilst the believed possessor of countless guineas, scarcely thought of his son; but, stript of his wealth, his thoughts—it was very natural—did turn to his truant child and the purse the youngling had stolen.

And now, reader, leave we the borough of Liquorish. Its street is silent, and save that certain of its dwellers have bought new Sunday coats and Sunday gowns—save that here and there in good man's house a new clock, with moralising tick to human life, gives voice to silent time—save that on certain shelves new painted crockery illustrates at once the vanity and fragility of human hopes, no man would dream that a member of parliament had within a few hours been manufactured in that dull abiding-place.

And now, reader, with one drop of ink, we are again in London. Ha! We have descended in St. James's Square. The morning is very beautiful; and there, at the Marquis's door, smiling in the sun, is an old acquaintance, Peter Crossbone, apothecary; the learned, disappointed man; for Crossbone had looked upon the escape of St. James from Dovesnest as an especial misfortune. All his professional days he had yearned for what he called

distinguished practice. We doubt whether he would not have thought the Tower lions, being crown property, most important patients. For some time, he had pondered on the policy of visiting young St. James, the wounded phœnix that had flown from his hands. His will was good; all he wanted was a decent excuse for the intrusion; and at length fortune blessed him. He felt certain of the young lord's condescending notice, if he, the village apothecary, could show himself of service to him. The marquis's father was much persecuted by that luxurious scorpion, the gout, that epicurean feeder on the best fed. Now Crossbone had in his own opinion, a specific cure for the torment; but he much doubted whether science would be his best recommendation to the young heir. No: he wanted faith in such an intercessor. And thus, with his brain in a pitch-black fog, he meditated, and saw no way. And now is he surrounded by mist, and now is he in a blaze of light. And what has broken through the gloom, and dawned a sudden day? That luminous concentration, that world of eloquent light—for how it talks!—a woman's eye.

Suddenly Crossbone remembered a certain look of Clarissa. And that look was instantly a light to him that made all clear. That look showed the jealousy of the husband; the passion of the wife. Snipeton was a tyrant, and Clarissa a victim. And then compassion entered the heart of Crossbone, and did a little soften it. Yes; it would be a humane deed to assist the poor wife, and at the same time so delicious to delight his lordship. And then he—Crossbone knew it,—he himself was so fit for the gay world. He was born, he would say, for the stones of London, and therefore hated the clay of the country.

Reader, as you turned the present leaf, Crossbone knocked at the door, and stood with an uneasy smile upon his face, awaiting the porter, who, with a fine, critical ear for knocks, knew it could be nobody, and treated the nobody accordingly; that is, made the nobody wait. In due season, Crossbone and the porter stood face to face. "Is Lord St. James within?" And Crossbone tried to look the easy, town man. It would not do. Had he been a haystack, the porter would as readily have known the country growth.

"Lordship within?" grunted the porter. "Don't know."

But Mr. Crossbone knew better. It was his boast; he knew life; and therefore always paved its little shabby passages with silver: other passages require gold, and only for that reason are not thought so shabby. True, therefore, to his principles, Mr. Crossbone sneaked a card and a dollar into the porter's hand.

"Ralph, take this card to his lordship. Good deal bothered, all of us, just now," added the porter.

"Good deal," corroborated Ralph, the son of Gum, and looking up and down at the apothecary, he went his way. Quick was his return; and with respectful voice he begged the gentleman to follow him.

"We have met before, Mr. Crossbone," said St. James, and a shadow crossed his face. "I well remember."

"No doubt, my lord. It was my happiness to employ my poor skill in a case of great danger. Need I say, how much I am rewarded by your lordship's present health?"

"I have been worse beaten since then," said the young lord, and he bit his lip. He then with a gay air continued: "Mr. Snipeton is, I believe, your patient?"

"Bless your heart, my lord,—that is, I beg your pardon,"—for Crossbone felt the familiarity of the benison—"Mr. Snipeton is no man's patient. King Charles of Charing Cross—saving his majesty's presence—has just as much need of the faculty. When people, my lord, have no feelings they have little sickness: that 's a discovery I 've made, my lord, and old Snipeton bears it out. Now his wife—ha! that 's a flower."

"Tender and beautiful," cried St. James, with animation. "And her health, Mr. Crossbone?"

"Delicate, my lord; delicate as a bird of paradise. I 've often said it, she wasn't made for this world; it 's too coarse and dirty. However, she 'll not be long out of her proper place. No: she 's dying fast."

"Dying!" exclaimed St. James. "Dying! Impossible! Dying—with what?"

"A more common malady than 's thought of, my lord," answered Crossbone. He then advanced a step, and projecting the third finger of the left hand, with knowing look observed—"Ring-worm, my lord."

"Ha!" cried St. James, airily. "Ring-worm! Is that indeed so fatal?"

"When, my lord, it fixes on the marriage finger of the young and beautiful wife of an old and ugly miser, it 's mortal, my lord—mortal, it does so affect, so ossify the heart. I 've seen many cases," added Crossbone emphatically, resolved to make the most of certainly a very peculiar practice.

"And there is no remedy?" asked St. James, as he placed his palms together and looked keenly in the apothecary's face.

"Why, I 've known the worm removed with great success: that is," said the apothecary, returning the look, "when the patient has had every confidence in the practitioner."

"Mr. Crossbone," cried St. James, "you are a man of the world?"

"My lord," answered the apothecary, with a thanksgiving bow "I am."

Now, when a man pays a man this praise, it happens, say six times out of nine, that the compliment really means this much: "You are a man of the world; that is, you are a shrewd fellow, who know all the by-ways and turnings of life: who know that what is called a wrong, a shabbiness, in the pulpit or in the dining-room (before company), is nevertheless not a wrong, not a shabbiness when to be undertaken for a man's especial interest. They are matters to be much abused, until required: to shake the head and make mouths at, until deemed indispensable to our health to swallow." To praise a man for knowing the world, is often to commend him only for his knowledge of its dirty lanes and crooked alleys. Any fool knows the broad paths—the squares of life.

And Mr. Crossbone—sagacious person!—took the lord's compliment in its intended sense. He already felt that he was about to be entrusted with a secret, a mission, that might test the lofty knowledge for which he was extolled. Therefore, to strengthen his lordship's confidence, the apothecary added, "I am, my lord, a man of the world. There are two golden rules of life; I have ever studied them."

"And these are?"—asked St. James, drawing him on.

"These are, to keep your eyes open and your mouth shut. Your lordship may command me."

"Mr. Crossbone"—and St. James, motioning the apothecary to a chair, seated himself for serious consultation—"Mr. Crossbone, this Snipeton has deeply injured me."

"I believe him capable of anything, my lord. Sorry am I to say it," said Crossbone, blithely.

"He has wounded the dignity of my family. He has wrested from us the borough of Liquorish"—Crossbone looked wondrous disgust at the enormity;—"a borough that has been ours, aye, since the Conquest."

"No doubt," cried Crossbone. "He might as well have stolen the family plate."

"Just so. Now, Mr. Crossbone, I do not pretend to be a whit better than the ordinary run of my fellow-creatures. I must therefore confess 'twould give me some pleasure to be revenged of this money-seller."

"Situated as you are, my lord; wounded as you must be in a most patriotic part, I do not perceive how your lordship can, as a nobleman and a gentleman, do less than take revenge. It is a duty you owe your station—a duty due to society, for whose better example noblemen were made. Revenge, my lord!" cried Crossbone, with a look of devotion.

"The sweeter still the better," said St. James.

"Right, my lord; very right. Revenge is a magnificent passion, and not to be meddled with in the spirit of a chandler. No trumpery ha'porths of it.—'twould be unworthy of a nobleman."

"Mr. Crossbone, you are a man of great intelligence. A man who ought not to vegetate in the country with dandelion and pimpernel. No, sir: you must be fixed in London. A genius like yours, Mr. Crossbone, is cast away upon bumpkins. We shall yet see you with a gold cane, in your own carriage, Mr. Crossbone."

And with these words, Lord St. James gently pressed the tips of Crossbone's fingers. The apothecary was wholly subdued by the condescension of his lordship. He sat in a golden cloud, smiling, and looking bashfully grateful. And then his eyes trembled with emotion, and he felt that he should very much like to acknowledge upon his knees the honour unworthily conferred upon him. It would have much comforted him to kneel; nevertheless, with heroic self-denial he kept his seat; and at length in a faint voice said—"It isn't for me, your lordship, to speak of my poor merits; your lordship knows best. But this I must say, my lord; I do think I have looked after the weeds of the world quite long enough. I own, it is now my ambition to cultivate the lilies."

"I understand, Mr. Crossbone! Well, I don't know that even the court may not be open to you."

The vision was too much for the apothecary. He sighed, as though suddenly oppressed by a burthen of delight. In fancy, he already had his fingers on a royal pulse, whose harmonious throbbings communicating with his own ennobled anatomy, sweetly troubled his beating heart. However, with the will of a strong man he put down the emotion, and returned to his lordship's business.

"You spoke of revenge, my lord? Upon that wealthy wretch, Snipeton? May I ask what sort of revenge your lordship desires to take?"

"Faith! Mr. Crossbone, my revenge is like Shylock's. I'd take it," said the young gentleman, with a smile of significant bitterness—"I'd take it 'nearest his heart.'"

"Yes, I understand; perfectly, my lord," said Crossbone with new gaiety. "The flesh of his flesh, eh? His wife?"

"His wife!" cried St. James passionately.

"Excellent, my lord! Excellent! Ha! ha! ha!" And the apothecary could not resist the spirit of laughter that tickled him; it was so droll to imagine a man—especially an old man—

despoiled of his wife. "She would be sweet revenge," cried Crossbone, rubbing his hands with an implied relish.

"And practicable, eh?" cried St. James. Crossbone smiled again, and rubbed his hands with renewed pleasure, nodding the while. "He has carried her from Dovesnest; buried her somewhere; for this much I know—she is not at his house in the city."

"I know all, my lord; all. I have received a letter—here it is,"—and Crossbone gave the missive to St. James: "you see, he writes me that she is ill—very ill—and as he has great faith in my knowledge—for there is no man without some good point, let's hope that—in my knowledge of her constitution, he desires me to come and see her. I've arrived this very morning in London. I was going direct to him; but—surely there's providence in it, my lord—but something told me to come and see you first."

"And I am delighted," said St. James, "that you gave ear to the good genius. You'll assist me?"

"My lord," said Crossbone solemnly, "I have, I hope, a proper respect for the rights of birth and the institutions of my country. And I have always, my lord, considered politics as nothing more than enlarged morals."

"Thank you for the apothegm," said the flattering St. James. "May I use it in parliament when—I get there?"

"Oh, my lord!" simpered Crossbone, and continued. "Enlarged morals. Now, this man Snipeton, in opposing your lordship for Liquorish, in bringing in a muffin-maker over your noble head—all the town is ringing with it—has, I conceive, violated wholesale morality, and should be punished accordingly. But how punished? You can't touch him through his money. No: 'tis his coat of mail. He's what I call a golden crocodile, my lord, with but one tender place—and that's his wife. Then strike him there, and you punish him for his presumption, and revenge the disgrace he has put upon your family."

"Exactly," said St. James, a little impatient of the apothecary's morals. "But, my good sir, do you know where the lady is?"

"No. But I shall order her wherever may be most convenient. Would the air of Bath suit you?" asked the apothecary with a leer.

"Excellently—nothing could be better," said St. James.

"Bath be it, then. And she must go alone; that is, without that Mrs. Wilton. I don't like that woman. There's a cold watchfulness about her that we can do without, my lord."

"But how separate them?" asked St. James.

"Leave that to me. Well handled, nothing cuts like a sharp lie; it goes at once through heartstrings." St. James passed his

hand across his face; he felt his blood had mounted there. "It has often separated flesh of flesh and bone of bone, and may easily part mistress and servant. Talking of servants, have you no trusty fellow to go between us, my lord?"

Even as the apothecary spoke Ralph brought in a card; the card given by St. James to St. Giles. The returned transport awaited in the hall the command of his patron.

"Nothing could be more fortunate," cried St. James. "Ralph, tell the man who brings this, to attend this gentleman and take his orders. To-morrow I will see him myself."

"And to-morrow, my lord," said the apothecary, with new courage holding forth his hand, "to-morrow you shall hear from me."

"To-morrow," said St. James.

"To-morrow; heaven be with your lordship;" and with this hope, the apothecary departed.

St. James hastily paced the room. The walls were hung with mirrors.

The young gentleman—was it a habit?—still walked with his hand to his face.

CHAPTER XXVII.

When Snipeton turned his horse's head from Dovesnest—for the which incident we must send back the reader some dozen chapters—he resolved, as he rode, upon closing his accounts with the world, that freed from the cares of money, he might cherish and protect his youthful, blooming partner. Arrived in London, seated at his books in St. Mary Axe, the resolution was strengthened by the contemplation of his balance against men. He had more than enough, and would enjoy life in good earnest. Why should he toil like a slave for gold-dust, and never know the blessings of the boon? No: he would close his accounts, and open wide his heart. And Snipeton was sincere in this his high resolve. For a whole night, waking and dreaming, he was fixed in it; and the next morning the uxorious apostate fell back to his first creed of money-bags. Fortune is a woman, and therefore where she blindly loves—(and what Bottoms and Calibans she does embrace and fondle!)—is not to be put aside by slight or ill-usage. All his life had Fortune doted upon Snipeton, hugging him the closer as she carried him up—no infant ape more tenderly clutched in ticklish places,—and he should not leave her. And

to this end did Fortune bribe back her renegade with a lumping bargain. A young gentleman—a very young gentleman—desired for so much ready metal, to put his land upon parchment, and that young gentleman did Fortune take by the hand, and smiling ruin, lead him to St. Mary Axe. In few minutes was Snipeton wooed and won again; for, to say the truth, his weakness was a mortgage. The written parchment, like charmed characters, conjured him; put imagination into that dry husk of a man. He would look upon the deed as upon a land of promise. He would see in the smallest pen-marks giant oaks, with the might of navies waiting in them; and from the sheepskin would feel the nimble air of Aready. There it lay, a beautiful bit of God's earth—a sweet morsel of creation—conjured and conveyed into a few black syllables.

And so, Snipeton made his peace with his first wife Fortune, and then bethought him of his second spouse, Clarissa. That he might duly attend to both, he would remove his second mate from Dovesnest. There were double reasons for the motion; for the haven of wedded bliss was known to the profligate St. James; who, unmindful of the sweetest obligation money at large usance ought to confer upon the human heart, dared to accost his creditor's wife. Let Dovesnest henceforth be a place for owls and foxes, Clarissa should bring happiness within an hour's ride of St. Mary Axe. The thought was so good, sent such large content to old Snipeton's heart, that with no delay it was carried out, and ere she well had time to weep a farewell to her favourite roses, Mrs. Snipeton left Dovesnest to the spiders.

Was it a wise change, this? Had Snipeton healthy eyes; or did avarice, that jaundice of the soul, so blear his vision, that he saw not in the thin, discoloured features of the wife of his bosom, aught to twitch a husband's heart? She never complained. Besides, once or twice he had questioned her; and she was not ill. No, well, quite well; and—this too he had asked—very happy. Nevertheless, it would the better satisfy him if Crossbone could see her. Crossbone knew her constitution, and—and so that meek and knowing man was summoned to London.

In a green, sequestered nook, half-way between Hampstead and Kilburn, embowered in the middle of a garden, was a small cottage; so hidden, that oft the traveller passed, unheeding it. In this cottage was Clarissa. To this retreat would her husband amble every day from St. Mary Axe, quitting his money temple for the treasure of his fireside, his pale and placid wife; and resolved to think himself blessed at both places.

"Mr. Snipeton is late to-day," said Mrs. Wilton, the mother housekeeper.

"He will come," replied Clarissa, in the tone of one resigned to a daily care. "He will come, mother."

Mrs. Wilton looked with appealing tenderness in her daughter's face; and in a low, calm voice, controlling her heart as she spoke, she said—"This must not be: do not repeat that word—not even when we are alone. Some day it may betray me to your husband, and then"—

"What then?" asked Clarissa.

"We should be parted; for ever—for ever," cried the woman, and with the thought she burst into tears.

"Not so. Nothing parts us; nothing but the kindliness of death," said Clarissa. "And death is kind, at least"—

"At least, my child, the world with you is too young to think it so."

"Old, old and faded," said Clarissa. "The spirit of youth is departed. I look at all things with dim and weary eyes."

"And yet, my child, there is a sanctity in suffering, when strongly, meekly borne. Our duty, though set about by thorns, may still be made a staff, supporting even while it tortures. Cast it away, and like the prophet's wand, it changes to a snake. God and my own heart know, I speak no idle thoughts, I speak a bitter truth, bitterly acknowledged."

"And duty shall support me on this weary pilgrimage," said Clarissa. Then taking her mother's hand, and feebly smiling, she added, "Surely, it can be no sin to wish such travel short: or if it be, I still must wish—I cannot help it."

"Time, time, my child, is the sure conciliator. You will live to wonder at and bless his goodness."

"You say so—it may be," said Clarissa, with a lightened look, "at least, I'll hope it." And then both smiled gaily—wanly; for both felt the deceit they strove to act but could not carry through. Words, words of comforting, of hope were uttered, but they fell coldly, hollowly; for the spirit of truth was not in them. They were things of the tongue, passionless, mechanical; the voice without the soul. At this moment, old Dorothy Vale entered the room; and she was welcome: even though she announced the coming of the master of the house.

"Master 's coming up the garden," said Dorothy, each hand rubbing an arm crossed before her. "Somebody 's with him."

"A stranger here! Who can it be?" cried Clarissa.

"Don't say he 's a stranger; don't say he isn't; can only see a somebody," answered Dorothy, in whom no show whatever of this world of shows could have awakened a momentary curiosity. Her inheritance, as one of Eve's daughters, was this beautiful earth, sky-roofed; yet was it no more to her than a huge deal

box, pierced with air-holes. A place to eat, drink, sleep, and hang up her bonnet in.

Another minute, and Snipeton entered the room. The husband had returned to the haven of his hopes, and was resolved that the world—then comprised in the single person of Peter Crossbone, who followed close at the heels of his host—should bear witness to his exceeding happiness; to the robust delight that, as he crossed his threshold, instantly possessed him: for with an anxious look of joy, he strode up to his wife, and suddenly taking her cheeks between both his hands, pursed out her lips, and then vigorously kissed them. He was so happy, he could not, would not feel his wife shrink at his touch—could not, would not see her white face flush as with sudden resentment, and then subside into pale endurance. No: the husband was resolved upon displaying to the world his exceeding happiness, and would not be thwarted in his show of bliss, by trifles. He merely said, still dallying with his felicity—"Never mind Crossbone; he's nobody; a family man—has been married, and that's all the same." Now, Crossbone, in his wayward heart, felt tempted to dispute such position; it was not all the same—to him. Nevertheless, he would not be captious. It was a poor, an ignorant opinion, and therefore his host and customer should have the free enjoyment of it.

"Mrs. Snipeton," said the Apothecary, "though I do not feel it professional to hope that anybody is well, nevertheless in your case, I do hope that—well, well, I see; a little pale, but never fear it—we'll bring the roses out again. In a little while, and you'll bloom like a bow pot."

"To be sure she will," said Snipeton. "I thought of buying her a pretty little horse; just a quiet thing"—

"Nothing could be better—perhaps. As I often say, horse-flesh is the thing for weak stomachs. I may say as much to you as a friend, Mr. Snipeton; folks often go to the doctor's, when they should go to the stable. Yes, yes—horse exercise and change of air"—

"We'll talk of it after dinner," said Snipeton suddenly wincing for his heart could not endure the thought of separation. Business and love were delightful when united; they gave a zest to each other: but certainly—at least in the case of Snipeton—were not to be tasted alone. Granted that he sat in a golden shower in St. Mary Axe; how should he enjoy the luck falling direct from heaven upon him, if his wife—that flower of his existence—was transplanted to a distant soil? Would not certain bees and butterflies hum and flutter round that human blossom? Again, if he himself tended the pretty patient, would not ruin—taking certain advantage of the master's absence—post itself at his door-

step? Doating husband—devoted man of money! His heart-strings tore him one way—his purse-strings another. "We 'll talk of it after dinner," he repeated. "And Master Crossbone, we 'll have a bottle of excellent wine." In some matters Crossbone was the most compliant of men: and wine was one that, offered cost-free, never found him implacable. And the truth is, Snipeton knowing this, hoped that the wine might contain arguments potent over the doctor's opinions. After one bottle, nay two, it was not impossible that Crossbone might reconsider his judgment. The air of Hampstead might be thought the best of airs for Clarissa. Wine does wonders!

The dinner was served. Crossbone was eloquent. "After your labours in town, Mr. Snipeton, you must find it particularly delightful, particularly so, to come home to Mrs. Snipeton,"—the husband smiled at his wife—"and dine off your own greens. One's own vegetables is what I consider the purest and highest enjoyment of the country. Of course, too, you keep pigs?"

Snipeton had prepared himself for a compliment on his connubial happiness; and therefore suffered a wrenching of the spirit when called upon to speak to his cabbages. With a strong will he waived the tender subject; and merely answered, "We do not keep pigs."

"That 's a pity: but all in good time. For it 's hardly possible to imagine a prettier place for pigs. Nothing like growing one's own bacon. But then I always like dumb things about me. And, Mr. Snipeton, after your work in town, you can't think how 'twould unbend your mind—how you might repose yourself, as I may say, on a few pigs. It 's beautiful to watch 'em day by day; to see 'em growing and unfolding their fat like lilies; to make 'em your acquaintance as it were, from the time they come into the world to the time they 're hung up in your kitchen. In this way you seem to eat 'em a hundred times over. However, pigs are matters that I must not trust myself to talk about."

"Why not?" asked Snipeton, with a porker-like grunt? "Why not?"

"Dear Mrs. Crossbone! Well, she *was* a woman!" (It was, in truth, Crossbone's primest consolation to know that she *was* a woman.) "Our taste in everything was just alike. In everything."

"Pigs included?" asked Snipeton, with something like a sneer.

But Crossbone was too much stirred by dearest memories to mark it. He merely answered, "Pigs included." After a pause. "However, I must renounce the sweeter pleasures of the country. Fate calls me to London."

"It delights me to hear it, Mr. Crossbone; for we shall then

be so near to one another," cried Snipeton. "Charming news this, isn't it, Clary?" And the old husband chucked his wife's chin, and would smile in her pale, unsmiling face.

"Well, as an old friend, Mr. Snipeton, I may perhaps make no difference with you. Otherwise, my practice promises to be confined to royalty. To royalty, Mr. Snipeton. Yes; I was sure of it, though I never condescended to name my hopes—but I knew that I should not be lost all my life among the weeds of the world. Reputation, Mr. Snipeton, may be buried, like a potato; but, sir, like a potato"—and Crossbone, tickled by the felicity of the simile, was rather loud in its utterance—"like a potato, it will shoot and show itself."

"And yours has come up, eh? Well, I'm very glad to hear it," said Snipeton, honestly, "because you'll be in London. Your knowledge of Clarissa's constitution is a great comfort to me."

"I have studied it, Mr. Snipeton; studied it as a botanist would study some strange and beautiful flower. It is a very peculiar constitution—very peculiar." The dinner being over, Clarissa rose.

"You'll not leave us yet, love?" cried Snipeton, taking his wife's hand, and trying to look into her eyes that—wayward eyes!—would not meet the old man's devouring stare.

"Pray excuse me," said Clarissa, with a politeness keen enough to cut a husband's heart-strings. "I have some orders—directions—for Mrs. Wilton. You must excuse me."

"That's a treasure, Crossbone!" exclaimed Snipeton with a laborious burst of affection, as Clarissa left the room. "A diamond of a woman! A treasure for an emperor!"

"Don't—don't"—cried Crossbone, hurriedly emptying his glass.

"I said a treasure!" repeated the impassioned husband, striking the table. Crossbone shook his head. "What," cried Snipeton, knitting his brow, "you question it? Before me—her husband?"

"Pray understand me, dear sir," said Crossbone, tranquilly filling his glass. "Mrs. Snipeton is a treasure. She'd have been a jewel—a pearl of a woman, sir, in the crown of King Solomon: and that's the worst of it."

"The worst of it!" echoed Snipeton.

"In this world, my good friend, if a man knew what he was about, he'd set his heart upon nothing." The apothecary drained his glass. "Looking, sir, as a moralist and a philosopher, at what the worth of this world at the best is made of,—what is it, but a large soap and water bubble blown by fate? It shines a minute"—here the moralist and philosopher raised his wine to his eye, contemplating its ruby brightness—"and where is it?"

Saying this, Crossbone swallowed the wine: a fine practical comment on his very fine philosophy. "I ask where is it?"

"Very true," observed Snipeton, taking truth as coolly as though used to it. "Very true; nevertheless"—

"Mr. Snipeton, my good friend," cried Crossbone—his hand lovingly round the neck of the decanter—"Mr Snipeton, he is the wisest man who in this world loves nothing. It's much the safest. Did you ever hear of the river Styx?"

"I can't say," growled Snipeton. "Is it salt or fresh?"

"One dip in it makes a man invulnerable to all things; stones, arrows, bludgeons, swords, bullets, cannon-balls."

"'Twould save a good deal in regimentals if the soldiers might bathe there," said Snipeton, grinning grimly.

"So much for Styx upon the outward man," cried Crossbone: "but I have often thought 'twould be a capital thing, if people could take it inwardly; if they could drink Styx."

"Like the Bath waters," suggested Snipeton.

"Exactly so. A course or two, and the interior of a man would then be insensible of foolish weakness," said Crossbone.

"You'd never get the women to drink it," remarked Snipeton, very gravely.

"'Twould not be necessary, if man, the nobler animal—for as Mrs. Snipeton is not here, we can talk like philosophers"—Snipeton grunted—"if man, the nobler animal, for we know he is, though it would not be right perhaps to say as much before the petticoats,—if man could make his own heart invulnerable, why, as for woman, she might be as weak and as foolish as she pleased; which, you must allow, is granting her much, Mr. Snipeton." And here the apothecary would have laughed very jovially, but his host looked grave, sad.

"It seems, Mr. Crossbone, you are no great friend to the women," said Snipeton. "Yet you must allow, we owe them much."

"Humph!" cried Crossbone in a prolonged note. He then hastily filled his glass: as hastily emptied it.

"You seem to dispute the debt?" said Snipeton, gallantly returning to the charge.

"Look here, Mr. Snipeton," cried Crossbone, with the air of a man determined for once to clear his heart of something that has long lain wriggling there—"look here. The great charm of a bottle of wine after dinner between two friends is this: it enables them to talk like philosophers; and so that the servants don't hear, philosophy with a glass of good fruity port—and yours is capital, one tastes blood and fibre in it;—philosophy is a very pleasant sort of thing; but like that china shepherdess on the

mantel-piece, it is much too fine and delicate for the outside world. No, no; it is only to be properly enjoyed in a parlour; snug and with the door shut."

"Very well. Perhaps it is. We were talking of our debts to woman. Go on," said Snipeton.

"Our debts to woman. Well, to begin; in the first place we call her an angel; have called her an angel for thousands of years: and I take it—but mind, I speak as a philosopher—I take it, that's a flam that should count as a good set-off on our side. Or I ask it, are men, the lords of the creation, to go on lying for nothing?" It was plain that this wicked unbelief of Crossbone a little shocked his host, and therefore, as the bottle was nearly out, the apothecary felt that he must regain some of his ground. Whereupon he sought to give a jocular guise to his philosophy; to make it, for the nonce, assume the comic mask. "Ha! ha! Look here: you must allow that woman ought, as much as in her lies, to make this world quite a paradise for us, seeing that she lost us the original garden." Snipeton just smiled. "Come, come," cried the hilarious apothecary, "we talk as philosophers, and when all 's said and done about what we owe to woman, you must allow that we 've a swinging balance against her. Yes, yes; you can't deny this; there 's that little matter of the apple still to be settled for."

"'Tis a debt of long standing," said Snipeton, with a short laugh.

"And therefore, as you know—nobody better"—urged Crossbone—"therefore it bears a heavy interest. So heavy, Mr. Snipeton—by-the-bye, the bottle 's out—so heavy they can never pay it. And so we mustn't be hard upon 'em, poor souls—no, we mustn't be hard upon 'em; but get what we can in small but sweet instalments. I—for all I talk in this philosophic way—I was never hard upon 'em—dear little things—never hard upon 'em in all my life."

For a few minutes philosophy took breath, whilst wine, the frequent nutriment of that divine plant, as cultivated by Crossbone, was renewed. At length the apothecary observed—"To serious business, Mr. Snipeton. Having had our little harmless laugh at the sex, let us speak of one who is its sweetest flower, and its brightest ornament. Need I name Mrs. Snipeton?"

The old man sighed; moved uneasily in his chair; and then with an effort began. "Mr. Crossbone, my friend—I cannot tell you—no words can tell you, how I love that woman."

"I can imagine the case—very virulent indeed," said the apothecary. "Late in life it 's always so. Love with young men, I mean with very young men, is nothing; a slight fever. Now, at mature time of life, it 's little short of deadly typhus. Of course,

I speak of love before marriage; that is, love with all its fears and anxieties; for wedlock 's a good febrifuge."

"I have struggled, fought with myself, to think—but you shall tell me—yes, I will strengthen myself to hear the worst. Now, man,"—and Snipeton grasped the arms of his chair with an iron hold, and his breast heaved as he loudly uttered—"now speak it."

"Look you here, Mr. Snipeton. Do you think me a stock, or a stone, that I could sit here quietly and comfortably drinking your wine, if I couldn't give you hope—a little hope in return?"

"A little hope!" groaned the old man.

"A man in my position, Mr. Snipeton—with glorious circumstances, as I have observed, opening upon him—cannot be too cautious. I should be sorry to compromise myself by desiring you to be too confident. Nevertheless, she is young, Mr. Snipeton; and the spirit of youth does sometimes puzzle us. In such spirit then—strong as it is in her—I have the greatest faith."

"You have!" exclaimed Snipeton, starting from his seat and seizing Crossbone's hand. "Save her and—and you shall be rich; that is, you shall be well recompensed—very well. My good friend, you know not the misery it costs me to seem happy in her sight. I laugh and jest"—Crossbone looked doubtingly—"to cheat her of her melancholy; yet"—

"Yet she does not laugh and joke in return?" observed Crossbone. "But she will—no doubt she will."

"And then, though I know her to be sick and suffering, she never complains: but still assures me she is well—very well."

"Dear soul! You ought to be a happy man—you ought, but you won't. Can't you see that she won't confess to sickness because—kind creature!—she can't think of paining you? She'd smile and say 'twas nothing—I know she would, if she were dying."

"For God's sake, speak not such a word," cried the old man, turning pale.

"She must die some day," said Crossbone. "Though, to be sure, according to the course of nature, that is, if I save her—of which, indeed, to tell you truly, I have now no doubt—I will stake my reputation present and to come upon the matter"—

"You give me life, youth," exclaimed Snipeton," with sudden happiness.

"But I was about to say that, if saved, the chances are you may leave her yet young and blooming, behind you." The old man's face darkened. It was a bitter thought that. Was there not some place in the East, where, when a husband died, his wife, even through the torture of fire, followed him? This horrid thought—how, poor man! could he help it? for reader, how know you what

thought you shall next think?—this thought, we say, passed through Snipeton's brain. But Clarissa was no Hindoo wife. She might—as the prating doctor said—she might be left, yes, to smile and be happy, and more, to award happiness to another on this earth, when her doating, passionately doating husband should have his limbs composed in the grave. Again; he might live these twenty years. And in twenty years that beautiful face would lose its look of youth—those eyes would burn with sobered light—that full scarlet lip be shrunk and faded. And then—yes, then he thought, he could resign her. In twenty years—perhaps in twenty years. With this cold comfort, he ventured to reply to the apothecary.

"Never mind my life, that's nothing. All I think of is Clarissa; and there is yet time—she is safe, you say?"

"It's very odd, very droll, that just now you should have named Bath—the Bath waters, you know," smirked Crossbone.

"Wherefore odd—how droll? I do not understand you." And yet he had caught the meaning.

"She must go to Bath; she must drink the waters. Nothing's left but that," averred the apothecary.

"I tell you, man, for these three months I cannot quit London. A world of money depends upon my stay."

"And why should you budge? You don't want your wife, do you, at St. Mary Axe? She doesn't keep your books, eh?" Snipeton frowned, and bit his lip, and made no answer. Then Crossbone, his dignity strengthened by his host's wine, rose. "Mr. Snipeton, I have studied this case, studied it, sir, not only as a doctor, but as a friend. I have now, sir, done my duty; I leave you as a husband and—I was about to say as a father, but that would be premature; as a husband and a man to do yours. All I say is this: if your wife does not immediately remove to Bath,"—Crossbone paused.

"Well," snarled Snipeton, defyingly, "and if she does not?"

"In two months, sir—I give her two months—she'll go to the church-yard."

"And so she may—so she shall,"—exclaimed Snipeton, violently striking the table—his face blackening with rage, his eyes lurid with passion. "So she shall. An honest grave and my name clear—I say, an honest grave, and a fair tombstone, with a fair reputation for the dead. Anything but that accursed Bath. Why, sir,"—and Snipeton, dilating with emotion, stalked towards the apothecary—"what do you think me?"

Now this question, in a somewhat dangerous manner tested Crossbone's sincerity. In sooth, it is at best a perilous interrogative, trying to the ingenuousness of a friend. Crossbone paused;

not that he had not an answer at the very tip of his tongue: an answer bubbling hot from that well of truth, his heart—and for that reason, it was not the answer to be rendered. He therefore looked duly astonished, and only asked—"Mr. Snipeton, what do you mean?"

"I tell you, man, I 'd rather see her dead; a fair and honest corpse, than send her to that pest-place," cried the husband.

"Pest-place! Really, Mr. Snipeton! this is a little too much to wipe off the reputation of a city—the reputation of hundreds of years too—in this manner. Reputation, sir—that is, if it 's good for anything—doesn't come up like a toadstool; no, sir, the real thing 's of slow growth. Bath a pest-place! Why, the very fountain of health."

"The pool of vice—the very slough of what you call fashion. And you think I 'd send my wife there for health! And for what health? Why, I 'll say she returned with glowing face and sparkling eyes. What then? I should loathe her."

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed Crossbone.

"Now, we are happy, very happy; few wedded couples more so: very happy"—and Snipeton ground the words beneath all the teeth he had, and looked furiously content. Crossbone stared at the writhing image of connubial love.

"You certainly look happy—extraordinarily happy,"—drawled the apothecary.

"And whilst we live, will keep so. Therefore no Bath insects—no May-flies, no June-bugs."

"'Tisn't the Bath season for 'em," put in the apothecary. "They 're all in London at this time."

"All 's one for that. I tell you what—here, Dorothy, another bottle of wine—I tell you what, Master Crossbone, as you say we 'll talk the matter over philosophically, I think that 's it; and therefore, no more words about Bath. Come, come, can there be a finer air than this?" cried the husband, rubbing his hands, and trying to laugh.

"My dear sir, the quality of the air is not the thing—it 's the change that 's the medicine. And then there 's the waters"—

"We have an excellent spring at Hampstead. Years ago I 'm told the nobility used to come and drink it."

"Then, sir, the waters hadn't been analysed. Since then they 've been found out: only fit for cattle, sir, and the lower orders. Never known now to agree with a person of gentility of stomach—that is, of true delicacy. And for the air, it 's very good, certainly, just for the common purposes of life; but as I say, it 's not the quality, it 's the change that 's the thing. There 's cases, sir, in which I 'd send patients, ay, from Montpelier to the neighbourhood

of Fleet-ditch. The fact is, sir, there can't be at times a better change than from the best to the worst. The lungs, sir, get tired—heartily sick of good air if it 's always the same : just as the stomach would get tired of the very best mutton, had it nothing but mutton every day."

Snipeton was silent ; pondering a refutation of this false philosophy. Still he tugged at his brain for a happy rejoinder. He felt—he was certain of it—that it would come when the apothecary had gone away, but unhappily he wanted it for present use. He felt himself like a rich man with all his cash locked up. Now wit, like money, bears an extra value when rung down immediately it is wanted ; men pay severely who require credit. Thus, though Snipeton knew he had somewhere in that very strong box, his skull, a whole bank of arguments, yet because he could not at the moment draw one, Crossbone—the way of the world—believed there were absolutely no effects. Snipeton, however, got over a difficulty as thousands before him—and thousands yet unborn will jump an obstacle ;—he asked his opponent to take another glass of wine. If Bacchus often lead men into quagmires deep as his vats, let us yet do him this justice, he sometimes leads them out.

"I believe you said something about horse exercise, Crossbone? Now with a horse—you don't drink "—a hospitable slander this on the apothecary—"with a horse there 's change of air at will, eh?"

"To be sure there is. And then there 's Highgate and Finchley, and—well, that might do, perhaps," said Crossbone.

"And in the evenings"—and Snipeton brightened at the prospect—"we could ride together."

"Death, sir,—certain death"—and Crossbone gave one of his happiest shudders. "The night air is poison—absolute poison. No, the time would be from—let me see—from eleven to three."

"Impossible ; quite impossible. Can't leave business—certain ruin," cried Snipeton.

"Certain death, then," said Crossbone, and he slowly, solemnly drained his glass. "Certain death," he repeated.

"Don't say that, Crossbone," cried Snipeton, softened. "Mrs. Wilton—perhaps she rides, and then"—

"As for Mrs. Wilton, I trust you are under no particular obligation to that person?"

"Obligation," cried Snipeton ; as though the thought implied an insult. "Why do you ask?"

"Nothing but for your wife's health. The fact is, Mrs. Wilton always seems melancholy, heavy ; with something on her mind. Now, my dear sir, it is a truth in moral philosophy not sufficiently

well known and attended to, that dumps are catching." And Crossbone looked the proud discoverer of the subtlety.

"Indeed—are they? Perhaps they may be. Well, there's a wench coming up from Kent—somewhere near Dovesnest. I've been coaxed to consent to it. She may make a sort of merrier companion."

"She may," said Crossbone; "but what you want is an honest, sharp fellow—for honesty without sharpness in this world is like a sword without edge or point; very well for show, but of no real use to the owner.

"Go on," cried Snipeton, bowing to the apothecary's apothegm.

"Now, I have the very man who'll suit you. The miracle of a groom. Honest as a dog, and sharp as a porcupine."

"Humph!" cried Snipeton, marvelling at the human wonder.

"Your servant, Mr. Crossbone"—said Dorothy Vale, opening the door—"has called as you desired."

"Tell him to come in," cried Crossbone: who then said to Snipeton—"At least you can see the fellow." And close upon these words, St. Giles stood in the room.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It may be remembered that Snipeton and St. Giles had met before. And certainly St. Giles had not forgotten the event: his somewhat anxious look declared his recollection of the scene at Dovesnest, in which he played the part of rogue and vagabond according to the statute; but as Snipeton had no corresponding interest in the circumstance, he had wholly forgotten the person of the outcast in the candidate for service. But in truth, St. Giles was not the same man. At Dovesnest he was in rags: fear and want had sharpened his face, withering, debasing him. And now, he breathed new courage with every hour's freedom.—He was comfortably, trimly clad; and his pocket—too oft the barometer of the soul—was not quite at zero. Hence, in few moments, he looked with placid respect at Snipeton, who stared all about his face, as a picture-dealer stares at an alleged old master; with a look that in its cunning, would even seem to hope a counterfeit. Was St. Giles really the honest fellow that he appeared; was there in truth the original mark of the original artist upon him: or was he a fraudful imitation especially made to gull a trusting gentleman?—Was there really no flaw in that

honest seeming face? And Snipeton as he looked half-wished that all men—or all servants at least—were fashioned like earthen vessels; that, properly filliped, they should perforce reveal a damnifying fracture. Certainly, such sort of human pottery, expressly made for families, would be an exceeding comfort to all housekeepers. Snipeton thought this; to his own disappointment thought it: for there being no such test of moral soundness, he could only choose the domestic, two-legged vessel before him by its looks. Alas! why was there no instant means of trying the music of its ring?

"That will do; you can wait," said Crossbone to St. Giles, who thereupon left the room.

"And what can you say for this fellow? Do you know all about him—who begot him—where he comes from?" asked Snipeton.

Crossbone was a man of quick parts: so quick, that few knew better than he, the proper time for a complete lie. We say a complete lie; not a careless, fragmentary flam, with no genius in it; but a well-built, architectural lie, buttressed about by circumstance. Therefore, no sooner was the question put to him than, without let or hesitation, he poured forth the following narrative. Wonderful man! falsehood flowed from him like a fountain.

"The young man who has just quitted us is of humble but honest origin. His parents were villagers, and rented a little garden ground whereon they raised much of their lowly but healthy fare. Far, far indeed was the profligacy of London from that abode of rustic innocence. His playmates—I mean the young man's—were the lambkins that he watched, for at an early age he was sent out to tend sheep: his books the flowers at his feet, the clouds above his head. Not but what he reads remarkably well for his condition, and writes a good stout, servant's hand. He was seven years old—no, I'm wrong, eight, eight years—when he lost his father, who, good creature, fell a victim to his humanity. A sad matter that. He was killed by a windmill."

"I thought you said 'twas his humanity," observed Snipeton.

"And a windmill," averred Crossbone. "A neighbour's child was gathering buttercups and daisies, and had strayed beneath the mill's revolving sails. The young man's father obeying the impulse of his benevolent heart, rushed forward to save the little innocent. His humanity, not measuring distance, carried him too near the sails; he was struck to the earth with a compound fracture of the skull, and died."

"This you know?" muttered Snipeton, looking with a wary eye.

"'Twas when I was an apprentice. The man being poor, and

the case desperate, 'twas given up to me to do my best with it. I learned a great deal from that case, and from that moment felt a natural interest in the orphan. And he has been worthy of it. You 'd hardly believe the things I could tell you of that young man. You can't think how he loves his mother."

"No great credit in that,—eh?" said Snipeton.

"Why, no; not exactly credit; but you must own it 's graceful —very graceful. He makes her take nearly all his wages. Hardly saves enough for shirts and pocket-handkerchiefs. Now, this strikes me as being very filial, Mr. Snipeton?"

"And you think he 'd make a good groom, eh?" asked the cautious husband.

"Bless you! he knows more about horses than they know themselves. But all he knows is nothing to his honesty. I 've trusted him with untold gold, and he has never laid his finger upon it."

"How do you know, if you never counted it?" asked Snipeton.

"That is"—said Crossbone, a little pulled up—"that is, you know what I mean. And—the thought 's been working in me, though I 've talked of other matters—I do think that a horse with the quick and frequent change of air a horse can give, may do everything for Mrs. Snipeton; for, as I 've said before—she 's young, very young; and youth takes much killing. And therefore, you 'll make yourself easy; come, you 'll promise me that?"

"I will," said Snipeton, a little softened. "You 've given me new heart. Come, another glass."

"Not another drop. Pen and ink, if you please. I must write a little prescription for a little nothing for your good lady; not that she wants medicine," said Crossbone.

"Then why poison her with it?" asked Snipeton with some energy.

"She wouldn't be satisfied without it. Therefore, just a little coloured negative; nothing more." Pen and ink were ordered, brought; and Crossbone strove to write as innocently as his art allowed him. "There must be an apothecary at Hampstead, and I 'll send the man with it;" and Crossbone folded the prescription and rose.

"And when shall we see you again?" asked Snipeton.

"Why, in two or three days. But I have done all the good I can at present. You 'll try the horse?"—

"I will."—

"And the man?"—

"I 'll think of him.—Tell me, does he know anybody in London?"

"Any calf you like brought to Smithfield, knows more of the

ways—more of the people of town. He 's a regular bit of country turf. Green and fresh. Else do you think I 'd recommend him ?" asked Crossbone very earnestly.

"I almost think—I mean I 'm pretty sure—that is, I will try him," said Snipeton.

"Then between ourselves, I 've recommended you a treasure. And—stop ; I was about to go, forgetting the most important thing. You heard me say that dumps were catching ? I hope you 've thought of that. Now, that Mrs. Wilton—the housekeeper—she 'd ruin any young woman. Bless you ! She 's hypochondria in petticoats."

"Humph ! I don't know ; I prefer a serious woman for her calling. Perhaps a little over melancholy to be sure, nevertheless "—

"I hate your very grave-looking people. If they really are what they look, they 're bad ; if they arn 't, they 're worse. And in a word—I might say more if I chose, but I won 't—in a word, I don't think that Mrs. Snipeton will ever get any good from your housekeeper. Good-bye, God bless you ;—the man shall bring the medicine." So saying, and looking deepest mystery, Crossbone departed.

The apothecary had achieved more than he had hoped. It was very true, thought Snipeton, the woman was cold—melancholy. Again, she had never looked upon him with pleasant looks. Her respect seemed wrung from her : it was not free—natural. And yet her eye watched his wife with unceasing regard. Every moment—when least wanted, too—she was hovering near her. How was it, he had never seen this before ? It was plain the woman had some false influence ; exercised some power that estranged his wife from him.

Let us leave Snipeton for a brief time struggling and weltering in this sea of doubt ; now trying to touch certain ground, and now carried away again. Let us leave him, and follow the apothecary. He had had just wine enough ; which circumstance was to him the most potent reason for having more. He had put up at the Flask at Hampstead ; and to that hostelry he strode, St. Giles silently following him.

"My man," said Crossbone, "who was your father—where were you born—what have you been doing—and where do you come from ? An answer if you please to each of these questions."

St. Giles, plucking up courage, simply replied—"I am his lordship's servant ; and have his orders to follow you."

"There 's not the slightest doubt, his lordship's servant, that you 're a convenient rascal of all work, and quite up to the business we shall put you to." Let not the reader imagine that these

words were uttered by Crossbone: by no means; not a syllable of them. But the thought—the ethereal essence of words—had touched the brain of the apothecary, and his whole frame tingled with the awakened music. He had found a scoundrel, he was sure of it, and he was happy.

"Very good, my man; very good: I understand you. As you say, you are his lordship's servant, and have his lordship's orders to take my directions. Very well. You will therefore please to take your father and mother from my hands. Understand, for once that they were honest, respectable people; and be grateful for the parents I 've given you. Your father, good man! was killed by a windmill; and your mother still lives in the country, and regularly takes three-fourths of your wages. And you are not to forget that you have a great love for that mother. And now, take this prescription to the apothecary's; tell him to make it up, and send to Mr. Snipeton's. After which, you'll come to me at the Flask. Go." St. Giles, with perplexed looks, obeyed Crossbone, and went upon his errand. "I 've given the vagabond a father and mother to be proud of—it 's quite clear, much better than were really bestowed upon him; and he hasn't a word of thanks to say upon the matter. Let a gentleman lie as he will for the lower orders, they 're seldom grateful. Nevertheless, let us have the virtue that he wants. Were he a piece of pig-headed honesty, he wouldn't suit our work. No: Providence has been very good in sending us a rascal." With these mute thoughts, this final thanksgiving, did Crossbone step onward to the Flask. He would there further ponder the plan that, throwing Snipeton's young wife into the arms of a young nobleman—(and, in common justice, so old and vulgar a man had no claim to such refinement and beauty; she must have been originally intended for high life, and therefore cruelly misapplied.)—would throw him, Crossbone, the prime conspirator, into the very highest practice. He would keep a carriage! As he looked at the glorious clouds, coloured by the setting sun, he felt puzzled whether his coach panels should be a bright blue, a flame-coloured yellow, or a rich mulberry. Still the clouds changed and shifted, and still with the colour of his carriage at his heart, he looked upon them as no other than a celestial pattern-book, rolled out to help him in his choice. The wide west was streaked and barred with gold; and staring at it, Crossbone was determined that lace, three-inch lace, should blaze upon his liveries. And rapt in this sweet dream, he walked on, his heart throbbing to the rumbling of his coach wheels. That music was so sweet, so deep, absorbing, that accompanying his footsteps, he was within a few paces of the Flask ere he saw a crowd gathered about the door, and heard the words

"he 's killed." His professional zeal was immediately quickened, and hurrying into the middle of the crowd, he saw the body of a man, apparently lifeless, carried towards the inn. The people crowded around, and by their very anxiety impeded the progress of the bearers towards the door. "Stand aside, folks—stand aside," cried Crossbone, "I 'm a physician; that is, a medical man. Keep his head up, fellow."

"Get out o' the way," exclaimed a stranger, "you don't know how to carry a fellow-cretur," and the benevolent new-comer thrust aside the rustic who was, awkwardly enough, supporting the shoulders of the wounded man, and with admirable zeal, and great apparent tenderness, relieved him of the charge. "Poor soul—poor soul!" he cried, much affected, "I do wonder if he 's a wife and family?"

"A bed-room; immediately—a bed-room," exclaimed Crossbone, and his sudden patient was carried up-stairs, Crossbone following. As he ascended, a horse bathed in foam, and every muscle quivering, was led to the door.

"It 's my belief that that Claypole sends out his boy to fly his kite a purpose to kill people, that he may bury 'em. That 's the third horse he 's frit this week; the little varmint! And this looks like death any how." Thus delivered himself, a plain-spoken native of Hampstead.

"You may say death. Cracked like a egg-shell;" and saying this, the speaker significantly pointed to his own skull. "The doctor 's a trying to get blood: it 's my opinion he might as well try a tomb-stone. Well, this is a world, isn't it? I often thanks my luck I can't afford a horse: for who 's safe a-horseback? A man kisses his wife and his babbies, if he has 'em, when he mounts his saddle of a mornin'—and his wife gets him lamb and sparrow-grass, or something nice for supper,—'xpecting him home. She listens for his horse's feet, and he 's brought to his door in a shell."

"Well, mate, you do speak a truth; nobody can deny that," said one of the mob; who, it is probable, scarcely dreamt that the sometime moralist and truth were so very rarely on speaking terms. And this the reader will, doubtless, admit, when we inform him that the man who so humanely, so affectionately lent his aid to the thrown horseman, helping to bear him with all tenderness up stairs, was Mr. Thomas Blast. It was his business, or rather, as he afterwards revealed, his pleasure to be at Hampstead—his solemn pleasure. At this moment, St. Giles on his return from the apothecary's, came to the inn-door. Ere he was well aware of the greeting, his hand was grasped by Blast,—"Well, how *do* you do? Who 'd have thought to see you here?" Who, in sooth

but Blast himself,—seeing that he had dogged his prey from St. James's-square? "Ha! my good friend," cried Blast, very much moved, "you don't know the trouble I 've had since we met. But you must see it in my looks. Tell me, ain't I twenty years older?"

"I don't see it," muttered St. Giles: though, assuredly, such a sight would have carried its pleasure to the runaway transport.

"Ha! you won't see it; that 's so like a friend. But don't let us stand in the street; come in and have a pot; for I 've somethin' to say that 'll set your art a bleeding." Hoping, praying, that Crossbone might not observe him—and feeling dwarfed, powerless, under the will of Blast,—St. Giles turned into a side-room with his early teacher and destroyer.

"I don't feel as if I could do anything much in the way of drink," said Blast, to the waiter following, "and so, a little brandy-and-water. Well, you wonder to see me at Hampstead, I dare say? You can't guess what brings me here?"

"No," said St. Giles. "How should I?"

"I'm a altered man. I come here all this way for nothin' else but to see the sun a settin'. Your health;" and Blast, as he said, did nothing in the way of drink: for he gulped his brandy-and-water.

"To see the sun a-setting!" cried St. Giles; we fear, too, a little incredulously.

"Ha! you 're young, and likes to see him a getting' up; it 's natrul; but when you 're my time o' life, and have stood the wear and tear o' the world as I have, you 'll rather look at the sun when he sets, then. And, do you know why? You don't? I 'll tell you. Acause, when he sets, he reminds you of where you 're a going. I never thought I should ha' been pulled up in the way I have been. But trouble 's done it. My only comfort 's now to look at the settin' sun—and he sets nowhere so stylish as here at Hampstead."

"And so you 've had trouble?" said St. Giles, coldly.

"Don't talk in that chilly way, as if your words was hailstones. I feel as if I could fall on your neck, and cry like a 'oman. Don't freeze me in that manner. I said trouble. Loss o' property, and death."

"Death!" cried St. Giles.

"Little Jingo. That apple o' both my eyes; that tulup of a child. Well, he was too clever to live long. I always thought it. Much too for'ard for his age. He 's gone. And now he 's gone, I do feel that I was his father." St. Giles stifled a rising groan. "But—it 's my only comfort—he 's better looked arter now than with me."

"No doubt," said St. Giles with a quickness that made Blast stare. "I mean, if he is where you hope he is."

"I should like to pay him some respect. I don't want to do much: but—I know it 's a weakness; still a man without a weakness has no right to live among men; he 's too good for this sinful world. As I was saying, I know it 's a weakness: still, I should like to wear a little bit o' black—if it was only a rag, so it was black. You couldn't lend me nothing, could you? Only a coat would be something to begin with."

St. Giles pleaded in excuse his very limited wardrobe; and Blast was suddenly satisfied.

"Well, he's gone; and if I was to go as black as a nigger, he wouldn't rest the better for 't. Besides, the settin' sun tells me we shan't be long apart. Nothing like sunsets to pull a man up; and so you 'll know when you 've had my trouble. Your health agin."

"And you have had a loss of property besides?" asked St. Giles.

"Look here," cried Blast, taking off his hat and rumpling up his hair: "here 's a change! Once as black as a crow; and now—oh, my dear friend"—St. Giles shrunk at the appeal as at a presented pistol—"if you want to put silver on a man's head, you 've only to take all the gold out of his pocket. Had a loss! You may say a loss. I tell you what it is: it 's no use for a man to think of being honest in this world: it isn't. I 've tried, and I give it up."

"That 's a pity," said St. Giles: knowing not what to say—knowing not how to shake off his tormentor.

"Why, it *is;* for a man doesn't often make his mind up to it. Well, I 've had my faults, I know; who hasn't? Still, I did think to reform when I got that lump of money; and more, I did think to make a man of you. I 'd chalked out the prettiest, innocentest life for both on us. I 'll make a sojer of Jingo, I thought; yes, I 'll buy him some colours for the army, and make him a gen'lman at once. And then I thought we would so enjoy ourselves! We 'd ha' gone and been one all among the lower orders. In summer time we 'd ha' played at knock 'em-downs with 'em, jest to show we was all made o' the same stuff; and in winter we wouldn't ha' turned up our noses at hot-cockles, or blind-man's buff, or nothin' of the sort; but ha' been as free and comfortable with the swinish multitude (for I did begin to think 'em that when I got the money) as if they 'd got gold rings in their noses, and like the pig-faced lady, eat out of a silver trough. I thought you 'd be a stick to my old age. But what 's the use o' thinking on it? As my schoolmaster used to say,—'Him as sets his

heart on the things of this life,'—I 've forgot the rest ; but it 's all of a piece."

"And how did you get this money?" asked St. Giles, with very well-acted innocence.

"How did I get the money? How should I get it? By the sweat of my brow." And so far, the reader who remembers the labour of Blast in his theft of the gold-box, may acquit him of an untruth.

"And having got such a heap of gold," rejoined St. Giles, "pray tell me—how did you lose it?"

Now Blast had, and never suspected it, a sense of humour: he could really enjoy a joke when least palatable to most men ; namely, when made against themselves. Nevertheless, with people who have only a proper pride of such philosophy, he had his share of sensitiveness, to be called up at a reasonable crisis. Hence, when St. Giles pressed him to explain his loss, the jest became a hurt. Good nature may endure a tickling with a feather, but resents a scratch from a tenpenny nail. "My dear young friend," said Blast, "don't do that ; pray don't. When you 're as old as me, and find the world a slippin' from under you like a hill o' sand, you 'll not laugh at the losses o' gray hairs," and again Blast drew his fingers through his locks meekly, mournfully. "How did I lose it? No: you warn't at Liquorish, you warn't? No ; you don't know? Well, I hope I 'm not much worse than my neighbours ; and I don't like wishing bad wishes, it is sich old woman's work ; it 's only barking the louder for wanting teeth. But this I will wish : if a clergyman o' the Stablished Church is ever to choke himself with a fish-bone, I do hope that that clergyman doesn't live far from Lazarus Hall, and that his name begins with a G. I 'm not a spiteful man ; and so I won't wish anything more plain than that. But it *is* hard"—and again Blast, he could not help it, recurred to his loss—"it *is* hard, when I 'd resolved to live in peace with all the world, to give a little money to the poor, and—as we all must die—when I did die, to have sich a clean, respectable moniment put up to me inside the church, with a naked boy in white stone holding one hand to his eyes, and the other putting out his link—you 've seen the sort o' thing I dare say?—it *is* hard to be done out of it after all. It 's enough to make a man, as I say, think o' nothin' but the setting sun. Howsomever, it serves me right. I ought to ha' know'd that sich a fine place must ha' belonged to the clergyman. If I 'd hid the box in a ditch, and not in a parson's fish-pond, at this blessed moment you and I might ha' been happy men ; lords for life ; and called, what I 've heard, useful members of society. And now, mate," asked Blast with sudden

warmth—"how do you like your place? Is it the thing?—is it clover?"

"What place?" asked St. Giles. "I'm in no place, certain, as yet."

"There, then, we won't say nothin' about it. Only this. When you're butler—if I'm spared in this wicked world so long,—you won't refuse an old friend, Jingo's friend, Jingo's mother's friend"—St. Giles turned sick at his mother's name, so spoken—"you won't refuse him a bottle o' the best in the pantry? You won't, will you? Eh?"

"No," stammered St. Giles. "Why should I? Certainly not, when I'm butler."

"And till then, old fellow,"—and Blast bent forward in his chair, and touched St. Giles's knee with his finger—"lend us a guinea."

St. Giles recoiled from the request; the more so, as it was seconded by contact with the petitioner. He made no answer; but his face looked blank as blank paper: not a mark was in it to serve as hieroglyph for a farthing. Blast could read faces better than books. "You won't then? Not so much as a guinea to the friend of Jingo's mother?" St. Giles scowled. "Well, as it's like the world, why should I quarrel? Now jest see the difference. See the money, I'd ha' given you, if misfortin' hadn't stept in. 'He's a fine fellow,' I kept continally saying to myself; 'I don't know how it is, I like him, and he shall have half. Not a mite less than half.' And now, you won't lend me—for mind I don't ax it as a gift—you won't lend me a guinea."

"I can't," said St. Giles. "I am poor myself: very poor."

"Well, as I said afore, we won't quarrel. And so, you shall have a guinea of me." Saying this, Blast with a cautious look towards the door, drew a long leathern purse from his pocket. St. Giles suddenly felt as though a party to the robbery that—he knew it—Blast must somewhere have perpetrated.

"Not a farthing," said St. Giles, as Blast dipped his finger and thumb in the purse. "Not a farthing."

"Don't say that; don't be proud, for you don't know in this world what you may want. I dare say the poor cretur up stairs was proud enough this mornin'; and what is he now?"

"Not dead!" cried St. Giles, "I hope not dead."

"Why, hope 's very well; and then it 's so very cheap. But there 's no doubt he 's gone; and as he 's gone, what, I should like to know"—and Blast threw the purse airily up and down—"what was the use of this to him?"

"Good God! You haven't stole it?" exclaimed St. Giles, leaping to his feet.

"Hush!" cried Blast, "don't make sich a noise as that with a dead body in the house. The worst o' folks treat the dead with respect. Else people who're never thought of at all when in the world, wouldn't be gone into black for when they go out of it. I'd no thought of the matter, when I run to help the poor cretur: but somehow, going up stairs, one of his coat tails did knock at my knuckles so, that I don't know how it was, when I'd laid him comfortable on the bed, and was coming down agin, I found this sort o' thing in my pocket. Poor fellow! he'll never miss it. Well, you won't have a guinea, then?"

"I'd starve first," exclaimed St. Giles.

"My good lad, it isn't for me to try to put myself over your head,—but this I must say; when you've seen the world as I have, you'll know better. You won't talk of starving in that manner."

At this moment, the waiter entered the room.

"How is the poor gentleman up stairs?" asked St. Giles. "Is there no hope?"

"Lor bless you, yes! They've bled him and made him quite comfortable. He's ordered some rump-steaks and onions, and says he'll make a night of it." Thus spoke the waiter.

"Do you hear that?" asked St. Giles of Blast.

"Sorry to hear it: sorry to think that any man arter sich an escape, should think o' nothing better than supper. My man, what's to pay?" St. Giles unbuttoned his pocket. "No; not a farden; tell you, I won't hear of it. Not a farden: bring the change out o' that," and Blast laid down a dollar: and the waiter departed on his errand.

"I tell you, I don't want you to treat me; and I won't have it," said St. Giles.

"My good young man, a proper pride's a proper thing; and I don't like to see nobody without it. But pride atween friends I hate. So good bye, for the present. I'll take my change at the bar." And Mr. Blast was about to hurry himself from the room.

"Stay," said St. Giles; "should I wish to see you, where are you to be found?"

"Well, I don't know," said Blast. "Sometimes in one place—sometimes another. But one thing, my dear lad, is quite sure." Here Blast put both his hands on St. Giles's shoulders and looked in his face with smiling malignity—"One thing is quite sure: if you don't know how to find me, I shall always know where to come upon you. Don't be afeard of that, young man."

And with this, Blast left the room, while St. Giles sank in his chair, weary and sick at heart. He was in the villain's power and seemed to exist only by his sufferance.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Does it live in the memory of the reader that Snipeton, only a chapter since, spoke of a handmaid on her way from Kent to make acquaintance with his fire-side divinities? That human flower, with a freshness of soul like the dews of Paradise upon her is, reader, at this very moment in Fleet Street. Her face is beaming with happiness—her half-opened mouth is swallowing wonders—and her eyes twinkle, as though the London pavement she at length treads upon was really and truly the very best of gold, and dazzled her with its glorifying brightness. She looks upon the beauty and wealth about her gaily, innocently, as a little child would look upon a state coffin; the velvet is so rich, and the plates and nails so glittering. She has not the wit to read the true meaning of the splendour; cannot, for a moment, dream of what it covers. Indeed, she is so delighted, dazzled by what she sees, that she scarcely hears the praises of the exceeding beauty of her features, the wondrous symmetry of her form; praises vehemently, industriously uttered by a youthful swain who walks at her side, glancing at her fairness with the libertine's felonious look. He eyes her innocence, as any minor thief would eye a brooch or chain; or, to give the youth his due, he now and then ventures a bolder stare; for he has the fine intelligence to know that he may rob that country wench of herself, and no Bridewell—no Newgate—will punish the larceny. Now, even the bow of sixpenny riband on her bonnet is protected by a statute. Besides, Master Ralph Gum knows the privileges of certain people in a certain condition of life. Young gentlemen born and bred in London, and serving the nobility, are born and educated the allowed protectors of rustic girls. The pretty country things—it was the bigoted belief of the young footman—might be worn, like bouquets on a birth-day.—And the wench at his side is a nosegay expressly sent by fortune from the country for his passing felicity and adornment. True it is, that Master Ralph Gum is scarcely looming out of boyhood; but there is a sort of genius that soars far beyond the parish register. Ralph's age is not to be counted by the common counters, years; but by the rarer marks of precocious intelligence. He is a liveried prodigy; one of those terribly clever animals that, knowing everything, too often confound simple people with their fatal knowledge. Therefore was it specially unfortunate for the damsel

that of all the crowd that streamed through Fleet Street, she should have asked Ralph Gum to indicate her way to St. Mary Axe. At the time, she was setting due eastward; when the faithless vassal assured her that she was going clean wrong; and, as happily he himself had particular business towards her destination, it would give him a pleasure he could never have hoped for, to guide her virgin steps to St. Mary Axe. And she—poor maid!—believed and turned her all-unconscious face towards Temple Bar. The young man, though a little dark, had such bright black eyes—and such very large, and very white teeth,—and wore so very fine a livery, that it would have been flying in the face of truth to doubt him. Often at the rustic fire-side had she listened to the narrated wickedness of London; again and again had she pre-armed her soul with sagacious strength to meet and confound the deception that in so many guises prowled the city streets, for the robbery and destruction of the Arcadian stranger. She felt herself invincible until the very moment that Ralph gave smiling, courteous answer to her; and then, as at the look and voice of a charmer, the Amazonian breast-plate (forged over many teas) she had buckled on, melted like frost-work at the sun, and left her an unprotected, because believing woman.

'"Why, and what 's them?" cried the girl, suddenly fixed before St. Dunstan's church. At the moment the sun reached the meridian, and the two wooden giants, mechanically punctual, striking their clubs upon the bell, gave warning note of noon. Those giants have passed away; those two great ligneous heroes of the good old times have been displaced and banished; and we have submitted to learn the hour from an ordinary dial. There was a grim dignity in their bearing—a might in their action—that enhanced the value of the time they noted: their clubs fell upon the senses of parishioners and way-farers, with a power and impressiveness not compassable by a round, pale-faced clock. It was, we say, to give a worth and solemnity to time, to have time counted by such grave tellers. If the parishioners of St. Dunstan and the frequent passengers of Fleet Street have, of late years, contributed more than their fair quota to the stock of national wickedness, may not the evil be philosophically traced to the deposition of their wooden monitors? This very valuable surmise of ours ought to be quoted in parliament—that is, if lawmakers properly prepared themselves for their solemn tasks, by duly conning histories like the present—quoted in opposition to the revolutionary movement of the time. For we have little doubt that a motion for the return of the number of felonies and misdemeanours—to say nothing of the social offences that may be the more grave because not named in the statutes—committed

in the parish of St. Dunstan's, would show an alarming increase since the departure of St. Dunstan's wooden genii. A triumphant argument this—we modestly conceive—for the conservation of wooden things in high places. "La! and what 's them?" again cried the girl, twelve o'clock being told by the strikers.

"Why, my tulup, them 's a couple of cruel churchwardens turned into wood hundreds of years ago, for their sins to the poor. But you *are* a beauty, that you are!" added Ralph, with burning gallantry.

"It can't be; and you never mean it," said the maiden, really forgetting her own loveliness in her wonder of the giants. "Turned into wood? Unpossible! Who did it?"

"Why, Providence,—or, something of the kind, you know," replied the audacious footman. "You 've heard of Whittington, I should think, my marigold, eh? He made a fortin in the Indies, where he let out his cat to kill all the vermin in all the courts—and a nice job I should think puss must have had of it. Well, them giants was churchwardens in his time: men with flesh and blood in their hearts, though now they 'd bleed nothing but saw-dust."

"You don't say so! Poor souls! And what did they do?" asked the innocent damsel.

Mr. Ralph Gum scratched his head for inspiration; and then made answer: "You see, there was a poor woman—a sailor's wife—with three twins in her arms. And she went to one churchwarden, and said as how she was a starving; and that her very babbies couldn't cry for weakness. And he told her to come to-morrow, for it wasn't the time to relieve paupers: and then she went to the other churchwarden, and he sent out word that she must come again in two days, and not afore."

"Two days!" cried the maiden. "The cruel creturs! didn't they know what time was to the starving?"

"Why, no; they didn't; and for that reason, both the churchwardens fell sick, all their limbs every day a turning into wood. And then they died; and they was going to bury 'em, when next morning their coffins was found empty; and they was seen where they now stand. And there was a Act of Parliament made that their relations shouldn't touch 'em, but let 'em stand to strike the clock, as a warning to all wicked churchwardens to know what hours are to folks with hungry bellies."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the girl, innocent as a bleating lamb. "And now, young man, you 're sure this is the way to Mary Axe?"

"Didn't I tell you, my sunflower, I was born there? I would carry your bundle for you, only you see, his lordship, the nobleman

I serve, is very particular. Livery's livery;—he'd discharge any of us that demeaned himself to carry a bundle. Bless you; there are young fellows in our square—only I'm not proud—that wouldn't speak to you with such a thing as a bundle; they wouldn't, my wild rose. But then, you're such a beauty!"

"No; I am not. I know what I am, young man. I'm not of the worst, but a good way from the best. Besides, beauty, as they say, is only skin-deep; is it?" asked the maiden, not unwilling to dwell upon the theme.

"Well, you're deep enough for me anyhow," replied the footboy, and he fixed his eyes as though he thought them burning-glasses, on the guileless stranger. "And now, here you are, right afore Temple Bar."

"Mercy! what a big gate! and what's it for, young man?" cried the wondering girl.

"Why, I once heard it said in our hall that Temple Bar was built on purpose to keep the scum of the City from running over into the West End. Now, this I don't believe," averred Ralph.

"Nor I, neither," cried the ingenuous wench, "else, doesn't it stand to reason they'd keep the gate shut?"

"My 'pinion is what I once heard,—that Temple Bar was really built at the time of the Great Plague of London, to keep the disease from the king and queen, the rest of the royal family, with all the nobility, spiritual and temporal." And Ralph coughed.

"Well, if you don't talk like a prayer-book!" exclaimed the maiden, full of admiration.

"I ought by this time; I was born to it, my dear. Bless your heart, when I was no higher nor that, I was in our house. I learnt my letters from the plate; yes, real gold and silver; none of your horn-books. And as for pictures, I didn't go to books for them neither; no, I used to study the coach-panels. There wasn't a griffin, nor a cockatrice, nor a tiger, nor a viper of any sort upon town I wasn't acquainted with. That's knowing life, I think. It isn't for me to talk, my bed of violets; but you wouldn't think the Latin I know; and all from coaches."

"Wonderful! But are you sure this is the way to Mary Axe?" and with the question the maiden crossed the city's barrier, and with her lettered deceiver trod the Strand.

"If you ask me that again," answered the slightly-wounded Ralph, "I don't know that I'll answer you. Come along. As the carriage says, '*Hora et semper.*'"

"Now, if you go on in that way, I won't believe a word you say. English for me; because then I can give you as good as you send. No; wholesome English, or I won't step another step;"

and it was plain that the timid rustic felt some slight alarm—was a little oppressed by the mysterious knowledge of her first London acquaintance. She thought there was some *hocus pocus* associated with Latin: it was to her the natural utterance of a conjuror. With some emphasis she added, "All I want to know is—how far is it to Mary Axe?"

"Why, my carnation, next to nothing now. Step out; and you 'll be there afore you know it. As I say, I only wish I could carry your bundle—I do, my daisy." Mr. Gum might have spared his regrets. Had his gracious majesty pulled up in his carriage, and offered to be the bearer of that bundle, its owner would have refused him the enjoyment; convinced that it was not the king of England who proposed the courtesy, but the father of all wickedness, disguised as a royal Brunswick, and driving about in a carriage of shadows, for the especial purpose of robbing rustic maids. As we have intimated, the damsel had, in the fastnesses of Kent, learned prudence against the iniquities of London. And so, believing that St. Mary Axe was close at hand, she hopefully jogged on.

"What a many churches!" she said, looking at St. Clement's. "Well, the folks in London ought to be good."

"And so they are, my wallflower," rejoined the footman. "The best in the world; take 'em in the lump. And there, you see, is another church. And besides what we have, we 're a going to have I don't know how many hundred more built, that everybody, as is at all anybody, may have a comfortable pew to his whole self, and not be mixed up—like people in the gallery of a playhouse—along of the lower orders. I dare say, now, your grandmother in the country"—

"Ain't got no grandmother," said the girl.

"Well, it 's all the same: the old women where you come from—I dare say they talked to you about the wickedness of London, did'nt they? And how all the handsome young men you'd meet was nothing more than roaring lions, rolling their eyes about, and licking their mouths, to eat up anybody as come fresh from the daisies? Didn't they tell you this, eh, beauty?" cried Ralph.

"A little on it," said the girl, now pouting, now giggling.

"And you 've seen nothing of the sort? Upon your word and honour, now, have you?" and the footman tried to look winningly in the girl's eyes, and held forth, appealingly, his right hand.

"Nothing yet; that is, nothing that I knows on," was the guarded answer of the damsel.

"To be sure not. Now my opinion is, there 's more downright wickedness—more roguery and sin of all sorts in an acre of the country than in any five mile of London streets; only, we don't

kick up a noise about our virtue and all that sort of stuff. Whilst quite to the contrary, the folks in the country do nothing but talk about their innocence, and all such gammon, eh?"

"I can't hear innocence called gammon afore me," said the girl. "Innocence is innocence, and nothing else; and them as would alter it, ought to blush for themselves."

"To be sure they ought," answered Gum. "But the truth is, because lambs don't run about London streets—and birds don't hop on the pavement—and hawthorns and honeysuckles don't grow in the gutters—London 's a place of wickedness. Now, you know, my lily of the valley,—folks arn't a bit more like lambs for living among 'em, are they?"

"Is this the way to Mary Axe?" asked the girl, with growing impatience.

"Tell you, tisn't no distance whatever, only first"—and the deceiver turned with his victim out of the Strand—"first you must pass Drury-lane playhouse."

"The playhouse—really the playhouse!" exclaimed the wench, with an interest in the institution that in these times would have sufficiently attested her vulgarity. "I should like to see the playhouse."

"Well then, my double heartsease, here it is," and Ralph with his finger pointed to the tremendous temple. With curious, yet reverential looks, did the girl gaze upon the mysterious fabric. It was delicious to behold even the outside of that brick and mortar rareeshow. And staring, the girl's heart was stirred with the thought of the wonders, the mysteries, acted therein. She had seen plays. Three times at least she had sat in a wattle-built fane, and seen the dramatic priesthood in their hours of sacrifice. Pleasant, though confused, was her remembrance of the strange harmonies that filled her heart to overflowing—that took her away into another world—that brought sweet tears into her eyes—and made her think (she had never thought so before) that there was really something besides the drudgery of work in life; that men and women were made to have some holiday thoughts—thoughts that breathed strange, comforting music, even to creatures poor and low as she. Then recollections flowed afresh as she looked upon that mighty London mystery—that charmed place that in day-dreams she had thought of—that had revealed its glorious, fantastic wonders in her sleep. The London playhouse! She saw it—she could touch its walls. One great hope of her rustic life was consummated; and the greater would be accomplished. Yes: sure as her life, she would sit aloft in the gallery, would hear the music, and see the London players' spangles.

"And this is Drury-lane?" cried the wench, softened by the thought—"well! I never!"

"You like plays, do you? So do I. Well, when we know one another a little better—for I wouldn't be so bold as to ask it now—in course not—won't we go together?" said Ralph; and the girl was silent. She did not inquire about St. Mary Axe; but trustingly followed her companion, her heart dancing to the fiddles of Drury-lane; the fiddles that she would hear. "And this is Bow-street, my jessamy," said Ralph.

"What 's Bow-street?" inquired the maiden. How happy in the ignorance of the question!

"Where they take up the thieves, and examine 'em, afore they send 'em to Newgate to be hanged." The wench shivered. "Never saw nobody hanged, I suppose? Oh, it 's nothing, after two or three times. We 'll have a day of it, my sweet marjoram, some Monday. We 'll go to the Old Bailey in the morning, and to the play at night: that 's what I call seeing life!—eh, you precious pink! But, I say, arn't you tired?"

"Well, I just am. Where is Mary Axe!" And the girl stared about her.

"Why, if I hav'n't taken the wrong turning, I 'm blest, and that 's lost us half a mile and more. I tell you what we 'll do. This is a nice comfortable house." Ralph spoke of the Brown Bear; at that day, the house of ease to felons, on their transit from the opposite police office to Newgate. "A quiet, respectable place. We 'll just go in and rest ourselves, and have atween us half-a-pint of ale."

"Not a drop; not for the blessed world," cried the girl.

"And then, I 'll tell you all about the playhouse and the players. Bless you! some of 'em come to our house, when the servants give a party. And we make 'em sing songs and tell stories, and when they go away, why, perhaps we put a bottle of wine in their pockets—for, poor things, they can't afford such stuff at home,—and then they send us orders, and we go into the pit for nothing. And so, we 'll just sit down and have half-a-pint of ale, won't we?"

Silently the girl suffered herself to be led into the Brown Bear. The voice of the charmer had entered her heart and melted it. To hear about plays and players was to hear sweet music; to listen to one who knew—who had spoken to the glorious London actors—who, perhaps, with his own hand had put wine-bottles in their pockets—was to gain a stride in the world. The gossip would not delay her above half-an-hour from St. Mary Axe; and what wonders would repay her for the lingering! Besides, she was tired—and the young man was very kind—very respectful—

nothing at all like what she had heard of London young men—and, after all, what was half an-hour, sooner or later?

Mr. Ralph Gum intonated his orders like a lord. The ale was brought, and Ralph drank to the maiden with both eyes and lips. Liquor made him musical: and with a delicate compliment to the rustic taste of his fair companion, he warbled of birds and flowers. One couplet he trolled over again and again. "Like what they call sentiment, don't you?" said Ralph.

"How can I tell?" answered the girl: "it 's some of your fine London stuff, I suppose."

"Not a bit on it; sentiment 's sentiment all over the world. Don't you know what sentiment is? Well, sentiment's words that's put together to sound nicely as it were—to make you feel inclined to clap your hands, you know. And that 's a sentiment that I 've been singing"—and he repeated the burden, bawling:

> 'Oh the cuckoo's a fine bird as ever you did hear,
> And he sucks little bird's eggs, to make his voice clear.'

"There, don't you see the sentiment now?" The maiden shook her head. "Why, sucking the little birds' eggs—that 's the sentiment. Precious clever birds, them cuckoos, eh? They 're what I call birds of quality. They 've no trouble of hatching, they havn't; no trouble of going about in the fields, picking up worms and grubs for their nestlings; they places 'em out to wet-nurse; makes other birds bring 'em up; while they do nothing themselves but sit in a tree, and cry cuckoo all day long. Now that 's what I call being a bird of quality. How should you like to be a cuckoo, my buttercup?"

"There, now, I don't want to hear your nonsense. What 's a cuckoo to do with a Christian?"—asked the damsel.

"Nothing, my passion-flower—to be sure not; just wait a minute," said Ralph—"I only want to speak to my aunt that lives a little way off; and I 'll be back with you in a minute. I 've got a message for the old woman; and she 's such a dear cretur—so fond of me. And atween ourselves, whenever she should be made a angel of—and when a angel 's wanted, I hope she 'll not be forgotten—shan't I have a lot of money! Not that I care for money; no, give me the girl of my heart, and all the gold in the world, as I once heard a parson say, is nothing but yellow dirt. And now I won't be a minute, my precious periwinkle."

And with this Mr. Ralph Gum quitted the room, leaving the fair stranger, as he thought, in profoundest admiration of the disinterestedness of footmen.

CHAPTER XXX.

The country girl, alone in the Brown Bear, had some slight twitchings of remorse. She felt it; she had very much slandered London and the Londoners. She had been taught—she had heard the story in fields and at fire-sides, seated in the shade of haystacks, and in winter chimney-corners—that London was a fiery furnace; that all its inhabitants, especially the males, were the pet pupils of the Evil One, and did his work with wonderful docility. And now, how much ignorance had departed from her! In an hour or two, how large her stock of experience! She was alone—alone in a London tavern; and yet she felt as comfortable, as secure of herself as though perched upon a Kent haycock. She had seen thousands of people; she had walked among a swarm of men and women, and nobody had even so much as attempted to pick her pocket; nobody had even snatched a kiss from her. With the generosity of a kind nature, she felt doubly trustful that she had unjustly doubted. She was in a London hotel (poor hawthorn innocence!) and felt not a bit afraid; on the contrary, she rather liked it. She looked about the room: carefully, up and down its walls. No; there was not an inch of looking-glass to be seen. Otherwise she thought she might have liked to take a peep at herself; for she knew she must be a fright; and the young man would be back soon; and though she cared not a pin about him—how could she?—still, still she should have liked one look.

"What, my little girl, all alone?" asked a new-comer—as the young woman thought, a very rude, and ugly, and somewhat old man. "Got nobody with you, eh? Where 's your parents?"

"I 'm not alone, and that 's enough," said the girl, and she fervently clutched her little bundle.

"Very well, my dear; wouldn't offend you, my lass; wouldn't"—

"I 'm not your dear; and I don't want at all to be talked to by you." Saying this, the girl continued to grasp her property, and looked with very determined eyes in the harsh, ugly face of the old intruder. The fact is, the girl felt that the time was come to test her energy and caution. She had too soon thought too well of the doings of London. The place swarmed with wicked people, there was no doubt of it; and the man before her was one of them. He looked particularly like a thief as he looked at her bundle.

"That 's right: quite right, my little wench. This is a place

in which you can't be too particlar," and saying this, Bright Jem —for it was the uncomely honesty of that good fellow's face that had alarmed the spinster—Bright Jem, with his mild, benevolent look, nodded, and passing to the further end of the room, seated himself in one of the boxes. And the girl felt more assured of his wickedness; and anxiously wished the return of that very nice young footman—that honest, sweet-spoken young man—so long engaged in converse with his aunt. Would he never come back? It was odd, but every moment of his absence endowed him, in the girl's mind, with a new charm. Bright Jem was all unconsciously despoiled of every good quality, that his graceless relative, Ralph Gum, might be invested with a foreign excellence.

Hark! a footstep. No; it is not the footman: he still tarries with his aunt. It is Jerry Whistle, the Bow-street officer, with his daily flower between his lips; his happy face streaked like an apple; and his cold, keen, twinkling eye that seemed continually employed as a search-warrant, looking clean through the bosoms of all men. He paused before the girl, taking an inventory of her qualities. And she, to repel the boldness of the fellow, tried to arm herself with one of those thunderbolt looks that woman in her dignity will sometimes cast about her, striking giants off their legs and laying them in the dust for ever. Poor thing! it was indignation all in vain. She might as well have frowned at Newgate stones, expecting to see them tumble, as think to move one nerve of Jerry Whistle. Medusa, staring at that officer, would have had the worst of it, and bashfully, hopelessly let drop her eyelids. And so it was with the country maiden. Jerry still stared, leaving the girl nothing to do but to wonder at his impudence. At length, however, Mr. Gum enters the room; and Jerry, glancing at him, and, as the girl thought, very much awed by his presence, instantly moves away.

"Well, I 'm so glad you 're come!" cried the girl, and her eyes sparkled, not unnoticed by the footman.

"Sorry, my daffydil, to keep you waiting; but aunt is such a 'oman for tongue. A good cretur though; what I call a reg'lar custard of a 'oman; made o' nothing but milk and spice and sugar."

"What! and no eggs? Pretty custards they 'd be," cried the girl, with a smile of pity for the detected ignorance.

"That 's like you women," said Mr. Gum, playfully twitching the girl's bonnet-string; "you can't allow for a bit of fancy: always taking a man up, and tying him to particlars. Well, you are a rose-bud, though!"

"Never mind: I know that: let us go to Mary Axe," and the girl vigorously retied her bonnet-strings, and stood bolt up.

"In a minute. Just half-a-mouthful of brandy and water atween us; just no more than would fill the eye of a little needle. You can't think what a lot of morals my aunt always talks: and you can't think how dry they always make me. Now, don't shake your dear little head as if it was of no use to you: I tell you, we must have a little drop, and here it is." (And Mr. Gum spoke the truth.) "I ordered it as I came in."

"Not a blessed drop—I won't, that I won't, as I 'm a sinner," cried the girl with feminine emphasis.

"A sinner! There never was a cherub on a tombstone like you. I should like to hear anybody call you a sinner—'twould be a bad day's work for 'em, I can tell you. Now, just a drop. Well, if you won't drink, put your lips to the edge of the glass, just to sugar it."

"Well, what a cretur you are!" said the girl; and with cheeks a little flushed, she took a bird's one sip of the liquor.

"Ha! now it 's worth drinking," cried Ralph; and he backed his opinion by taking a long draught. "And now," said he, staring full in the girl's face, and taking her hand, "and now, as a particlar favour, I want you to tell me one thing. Just one private question I have to put. Look in my eyes, and tell me what you think of love."

"Go along with your rubbish!" exclaimed the girl; at once cutting the difficulty of a definition. Love! Rubbish! She knew it not; but the wench spoke with the tongue of old philosophy. She gave a homely expression to the thoughts of sages, anchorites, and nuns. The shirt of hair; the iron girdle; the flagellating thong, all declare the worthlessness of love. "Love is rubbish" chants the shaven monk: and the like treason breathes the white-lipped sister, and sometimes thinks it truth. The words are writ on monastery, convent walls, though dull and dim-eyed folks without do not believe them; and—perverse is man!—turn from the silver music of the syllables for jangling marriage-bells.

"Ain't you afeard the roof will tumble on you? Love rubbish! Why, it 's what I call the gold band about natur's hat,"—for liquor made the footman metaphorical. "Love, my slip of lavender, love is"——

"I don't want to know nothing about it, and I wont stay a minute longer from Mary Axe." And again the girl stood up, and began to push her way from the box, Mr. Ralph Gum refusing to give place, at the same time lifting the teaspoon from the glass, and vainly menacing her with it in the very prettiest manner.

"Well, my peppermint, you shall go; to be sure you shall.

There now "—— And with determined swallow, Mr. Gum emptied the glass to prove his devotedness to her will. "We 'll pay at the bar, my poppy. Don't forget your bundle. Got your best things in it, eh? Don't forget it, then."

A smile, with something of contempt in it, played about the maiden's lip. Forget it?—as if any woman ever forgot a bundle, the more especially when it contained any of those vestments that, looked upon with thoughtful, melancholy eyes, are only flowing, shining proofs of a fallen state, though the perverse ingenuity of the sex contrives to give a prettiness to the livery of sin, to the badges of our lapsed condition. When we remember that both sorts of millinery, male and female, are the consequences of original wickedness, ought not the manly heart to shrink, and feel a frog-like coldness at an embroidered waistcoat? Ought not woman, smitten with the recollection of the treason of her great mother, to scream even at the rustling of a pompadour, as at the moving scales of a gliding snake? She ought; but we fear she seldom does. Nay, sometimes she actually loves—determinedly loves—fine clothes, as though she had first waked in Paradise, like a queen from a siesta, in velvet and brocade, with jewels in her hair, and court-plaster stars upon her cheek. With heart-breaking perverseness, she refuses to admit the naked truth to her soul, that the milliner came into the world with death. Otherwise, could philosophy with its diamond point engrave this truth upon the crystal heart of woman, it would very much serve to lessen pin-money. We have heard it said—of course we immediately wrapt our countenance in our cloak, and ran from the slanderer—that woman fell for no other purpose than to wear fine clothes. In the prescience which she shared with man she saw the looms of the future world at work, and lost herself for a shot sarsnet. It is just as possible, too, that some of her daughters may have tripped at the window of a mercer.

We cannot at this moment put our finger upon the passage, but surely it is somewhere written in the Talmud, that Eve on leaving Eden already took with her a choice and very various wardrobe. We have entirely forgotten the name of the writer who gives a very precise account of the moving. Nevertheless, many of the details are engraved—as with pen of iron upon rock—on our heart. First came a score of elephants; they, marching with slow pace, carried our first mother's gowns bestowed in wicker-work. To a hundred and fifty camels were consigned the caps and 'kerchiefs. And our author, we remember, compassionately dwells upon a poor dromedary,—one of two hundred—that, overladen with bonnet-boxes, refused to get upon his legs until the load was lightened by half, and another hunchbacked beast

appointed to share the burden. Whole droves of ponies that have since made their way to Wales and Shetland, carried shoes and silk stockings, (with the zodiac gold-worked for clocks,) and ruffs and wimples, and farthingales and hoods, and all the various artillery that down to our day, from masked batteries aim at the heart of heedless, unsuspecting, ingenuous man,—weapons that, all unseen, do sometimes overthrow him! And in this way, according to the Talmudist, did Eve move her wardrobe into the plain country; and in so very short a time—so active is woman, with her heart like a silkworm, working for fine clothes—did our first mother get about her, what she, with natural meekness called, only a few things; but which Adam—and at only the nine thousandth package, with an impatient sulkiness that we fear has descended to some of his sons—denominated a pack of trumpery. If women, then, are sensitive in the matter of bundles, they inherit the tenderness from their first rosy mother. And our country wench, though we think she had never read the Talmud, had an instinctive love for the fine clothes she carried with her.—An instinct given her by the same beneficent law that teaches parrots and cockatoos to preen their radiant feathers.

Whilst, with profane fingers—like an allowed shopman—we have twiddled with the legendary silks and muslins, and other webs the property of Eve: whilst we have counted the robe-laden elephants, and felt our heart melt a little at the crying, eloquent pathos of the bonnet-crushed dromedary, Mr. Ralph Gum has paid for his liquor, and, his heart generous with alcohol, has stept into Bow-street. Glowing with brandy and benevolence, he heroically observed—"Never mind the bundle. I don't care if any of our folks do see me. So, my heart's honeysuckle, take my arm." And, with little hesitation—for now they could not be very far from St. Mary Axe—the girl linked herself to that meek footman. "Don't know what place this is, of course? Covent-garden market, my bluebell. This is where we give ten guineas a pint for green peas, and "——

"Don't they choke you?" cried the wench, astounded at what she thought a sinfulness of stomach.

"Go down all the sweeter," answered the epicurean vassal. "When they get to ten shillings a peck, they 're out of our square altogether; only fit for pigs. Noble place, isn't it? Will you have a nosegay? Not but what you 're all a nosegay yourself; nevertheless, you shall have something to sweeten you; for that Mary Axe—well, I wouldn't set you against it—but for you to live there; you, a sweet little cretur that smells of nothing but cow's breath and new-mown hay;—why, it 's just murder in a slow manner. So do have a nosegay;" and Mr. Gum insisted

upon disbursing threepence for a bunch of wallflowers, which—against his wish and intention—she herself placed in her bosom Then he said: "I do pity you, going to Mary Axe."

"But I'm not a going to stay there," said the girl: "no—I'm only going to see master, and he's to take me into the country, to live with sich a sweet young lady."

"Well, there'll be a couple of you," said Ralph, "I'm blessed if there won't. And whereabouts?"

"That's telling," replied the girl; as though she stored up a profound secret in her heart, that it would take at least five minutes for Ralph's picklock tongue to come at. This Ralph felt, so said no more about it.

"And here, in this place, we make our Members for Westminster—things for Parliament, you know."

"How droll! What should they bring 'em like turnips to market for?" inquired the wench, wondering.

"Don't you know? Because they may be all the nearer the bad 'tatoes and the cabbage stumps. That's what our porter tells me is one of the rights of the constitution; to pelt everybody as puts himself up to go into Parliament. Well, I've been done out of a nice chance, I have," said the footman with sudden melancholy.

"What do you mean? Not lost anything!" and the girl looked sweetly anxious.

"Ain't I, though? You see, his lordship, my young master, went and stood in the country; and I couldn't go down with him. Now, if he'd only put up for Westminster, I'd just have come here in plain clothes, and dressing myself as if I was a blackguard, shouldn't he have known what bad 'tatoes was!"

"Why, you wicked cretur! you wouldn't have thrown 'em at him?"

"Oh, wouldn't I though!" cried Mr. Gum, and he passed his tongue round his lips, enjoyingly.

"What for? Is he sich a wicked master—sich a very bad man?" inquired the girl.

"Don't know that he is. Only you can't think what a pleasure it is to get the upper hand of high folks for a little while; and 'tatoes and cabbage stumps do it. It's a satisfaction, that's all," said the footman.

"I won't walk with you—not another step," and the wench angrily withdrew her arm.

"There you go, now; there you go. Just like all you women; if a man makes a harmless joke,—and that's all I meant—you scream as if it was a flash of lightning. Bless you! I'd go to the world's end for my master, even if I never was to see him again. That I would, my sprig of parsley."

"Is this the way to Mary Axe? If I'm not there directly, I'll ask somebody else."

"Just round this turning, and it's no way at all." And Mr. Gum went through the market, and through street after street, and threaded two or three courts, the girl looking now impatient, now distrustful. At length Ralph paused. "My dear, if I havn't left something at my aunt's! In that house, there; just step in a minute, while I call for it."

"No, I sha'n't," answered the wench, with a determination that somewhat startled Mr. Gum. "I sha'n't go into any house at all, afore I come to Mary Axe. And if you don't show me the way directly, I'll scream."

"Why, what a little sweet-briar you are! Don't I tell you, my aunt lives there? A nice, good old soul, as would be glad to see you—glad to see anybody I brought to her. I tell you what, now, if I must say the truth, I told her what a nice girl you was; and how you was waiting for me; and the good old 'oman began to scold me; and asked me why I didn't bring you here. I sha'n't stop a minute—not a minute."

The girl looked up in Ralph's face; looked up so trustingly, and again so innocently placed her arm in his, that that great-hearted footman must have felt subdued and honoured by the confidence of his companion. And so he was about to hand her across his aunt's threshold—he was about to bring her face to face with that venerable, experienced, yet most mild woman,—when, suddenly, he felt his right ear seized as by a pair of iron pincers, and the next moment he felt himself spinning round and round; and the very next moment he lay tumbled in a heap upon the pavement. His heart bursting with indignation, he looked up, and—somehow, again he felt another tumble, for he saw in his assailant Bright Jem, his mother's brother-in-law; the meddlesome, low fellow, that had always taken it upon himself to talk to him. A few paces distant, too, was Mr. Whistle, Bow-street officer, serenely turning his flower between his lips, and with both his hands in his pockets, looking down upon the footman as though he was of no more account than a toadstool. Of course, the girl screamed as the assault was committed; of course, for a few moments her rage against the ruffian,—the ugly man who had, and so like his impudence, spoken to her at the Brown Bear,—was deep and womanly. But suddenly the face of Mr. Gum grew even a little darker; and the wench, though no scholar, read treason in every black line. Hence, with growing calmness, she beheld Mr. Gum elaborately rub himself, as he slowly rose from the pavement.

"Who spoke to you? What did you do that for?" Such was the poor platitude that the smitten footman uttered: for guilt was

at his heart; detection weighed upon him, and he could not crow.

"Doesn't his aunt live here?" cried the girl. "He said it was his aunt that wanted to see me?"

"The only aunt he ever had," said Bright Jem, "is in heaven; and—I know it—she's a blushing for him this very minute. I say, Whistle, couldn't we help him to a little Bridewell for all this?"

Mr. Whistle, shifting his flower to the corner of his mouth, was about to say something; but it was clear that Mr. Gum had not at the moment either taste or leisure to attend to legal opinions. He therefore took to his heels; and he never ran so fast, because, perhaps, he never felt so little as he ran.

"Now wasn't I right, Whistle? And didn't I say that there was mischief in him? And wasn't it lucky we followed him from the Bear? Well, he has a nice crop of early wickedness, hasn't he?" Thus spoke Bright Jem, with a face of wonder. Mr. Whistle, however, was in no way disconcerted or astonished. He was one of those unfortunate people—though he himself considered his happy superiority to arise from the circumstance—who had seen so much wickedness, that any amount or eccentricity of evil failed to surprise him. He therefore twirled the flower in his mouth, and remarked a little plaintively—"Why was you so quick? If you'd only had patience, we might have sent him to Bridewell; and now, you've spoilt it all—spoilt it all." With these words, and a brief shadow of disappointment on his brow, the officer departed.

"Poor little soul!" cried Jem, taking the girl's hand, and looking paternally in her face—"where did you come from—and where are you going to? Come, you'll answer me, now, won't you?"

"I come from Kent, and I'm going to Mary Axe. That young man, I thought, was taking me the way"—

"Poor little lamb! You wouldn't think he was old enough for so big a villain; but somehow, he's been reared in a hot-bed, and has spindled up 'stonishingly. He's my wife's sister's child, and I will say this for his father; he was as good and as 'onest a nigger as ever a Christian white man stole to turn a penny with. But we can't send goodness down from father to son; it can't be willed away, like the family spoons. 'Virtue,' as Mr. Capstick says, 'like vice, doesn't always descend in a right line; but often goes in a zigzag.'"

The girl was an attentive listener; but we fear did not very perfectly understand the uttered philosophy. She, however, felt that she had been snatched from peril by the interference of the

odd and ugly-looking man before her, and gratitude and confidence stirred in her woman's heart. "Bless you, sir; I was very uncivil, but I thought—that is—I 'm in such a tremble—can you take me to Mary Axe? I 'm going to a place. Perhaps you know the gentleman—Mr. Snipeton? I mean Mrs. Snipeton, his beautiful young wife?"

Jem stared, and marvelled at the strangeness of the accident. He, however, owned to no acquaintance with the fortunate owner of the lady. "Take my arm," he said, "and I'll leave you at the very door." With this Jem proceeded onward, and at length turned into Long Acre. Passing the door of Capstick—for we believe we have already informed the reader that the member for Liquorish had taken humble lodgings in that district—the door opened, and the senator himself, with no less a person than Mr. Tangle, attorney-at-law, advanced to the threshold.

"Eh, Jem! What 's this? A thing from the buttercups? Where did you pick it up?" cried Capstick. Now the wench was no grammarian, yet she seemed to have a born knowledge that "*it*" applied to one of the female gender was alike a violation of grammar and good-breeding. Therefore she echoed "it" between her teeth, with of course a significant tossing of the head.

Jem observed the working of the feminine mind, and immediately whispered to the girl—"He 's my master and a member of Parliament; but the best cretur in the world." Jem then in a bold voice informed the senator that "the young 'oman was come up from the country to go to service at Mr. Snipeton's."

"Bless me! what a very strange accident! Come to Mr. Snipeton's, eh? How very odd!" cried Tangle, feeling that he ought to speak.

In the meantime Bright Jem, with commendable brevity, whispered to Capstick the history of his meeting with the gentle wayfarer. "Well, and she looks an innocent thing," said Capstick, his face scarlet with indignation at Jem's story. "She looks innocent; but after all she 's a woman, Jem; and women can look whatever they like. They 've a wonderful way of passing pocket-pieces for virgin gold. I don't believe any of 'em; nevertheless, Jem, run for a coach; and as Mr. Tangle and myself are going to Snipeton's, we can all go together. I dare say, young woman, you 're tired of walking? You look so; if, as I say, looks are anything. Jem, run for the coach. Come up stairs." And with this invitation, Capstick gently clasped the arm of the maiden—a little awe-struck that she felt the pressure of that mysterious, solemn creature, a live member of parliament—and led her, ascending, to his room. Mr. Tangle followed, much scandalised at the familiarity of the legislator; and fortifying himself with

the determination, not, without a vehement remonstrance, to ride in the same hackney-coach with a maid-of-all-work.

Mr. Capstick had, he was accustomed to declare, furnished his room with a vigilant eye to his duties as a member of parliament. Over his mantel-piece was Magna Charta, framed and glazed. "A fine historic fiction," he would say; "a beautiful legend; a nice sing-song to send men to sleep, like the true and tragical history of Cock Robin chaunted to children." He was wont to chuckle mightily at the passage—a fine stretch of fancy he would call it—about "selling or deferring justice," and vow it ought to be written in blood-red letters in the Court of Chancery. "There is fine, grave comedy, in this sheet, sir; an irony that strengthens the nerves like a steel draught. They ought to hang it up on board the Tower Tender; 'twould make pretty reading for the free-born Englishman, kidnapped from wife and children to fight, and, by the grace of the cat, to be cut into a hero to vomit songs about." And in this irreverent, rebellious fashion would the member for Liquorish talk of Magna Charta. He called it a great national romance; and never failed to allude to it as evidence of the value of fine fiction upon a people. "Because it ought to be true," he would say, "they think it is."

And the misanthrope member had odd nicknack toys; and all, as he said, to continually remind him of his duties as a senator and a citizen. He had a model of George the Third's new drop in mahogany. "One of the institutions of my country," he would say, "improved under the reign of my gracious sovereign. Some folks hang up the royal portrait. Now I prefer the works of a man to his looks. Every ordinary morning I bow once to that engine as a type of the wisdom and philanthropy of a Christian land; once on common occasions, and three times on hanging-days." Besides this, he had a toy pillory; with a dead mouse fixed, and twirling in it. "And when I want an unbending of the immortal mind within me—by the way," Capstick once said to Tangle, "what a bow we do sometimes make of the immortal mind, the better to shoot at one another with—when I want to unbend a little, I place the pillory before me, and pelt the mouse with cherry-stones and crumbs. And you wouldn't believe it, but it does me quite as much good—quite as much—as if the dead mouse was a living man, and the stones and crumbs were mud and eggs."

There were other fantastic movables which, for the present, we must pass. Mr. Capstick, to the astonishment of Tangle, approached a corner cupboard, taking therefrom a decanter of wine and a glass. "You are tired, young woman; and sometimes a little of this—just a little—is medicine to the weary." He

then poured out the wine; which the wench obediently swallowed. Had it been the most nauseous drug, there was such a mixture of kindness and authority in the manner of the member of parliament,—the physic must have gone down.

"Mr. Capstick, one word," said Tangle, and he drew the senator to a corner of the room. "Doubtless, I made a mistake. But you know we have important business to transact: and no, you never intend to go to Mr. Snipeton's in the same coach with that gentleman's maid-of-all-work!"

"She won't bite, will she?" asked Capstick.

"Bite!" echoed Tangle.

"Coach is at the door, sir," said Bright Jem, entering the room.

"Go you first," said Capstick to Tangle, in a tone not to be mistaken; "I'll bring the young woman." And if Tangle had been really a four-footed dog, he would, as he went down stairs, have felt a great depression of the caudal member, whilst the senatorial muffin-maker tript after him with the ignominious maid-of-all-work.

CHAPTER XXXI.

For some days Snipeton had half resolved to surprise his wife with a present; a dear and touching gift,—the miniature of her father. Again and again he had determined upon the graceful act; and as often put the expensive thought aside—trod the weakness down as an extravagant folly. And then it would occur to his benevolence, that he might make a bargain with himself, and at the same time impart a pleasure to his spouse. The miniature was enriched with diamonds; first-water gems, he knew, for he had lent gold upon them; though his wife—at the time of the loan she was yet unmanacled—was unconscious of the ready money kindness. Her father had withered, died, in the clutch of the usurer; who still cherished the portrait of the dead man—it was so very dear to him. The picture had been a bridal present to Clarissa's mother; it had lain warm in her wedded bosom; though Snipeton, when he grasped the precious security, knew nothing of its history. Well, he would certainly delight Clarissa with this sweet remembrance of her father. She knew not of its existence, and would bless and love her husband for his sudden goodness. He would give the wife the miniature; it was settled: he would do it. "What! with the diamonds?" cried Snipeton's

careful genius, twitching his heartstrings, to pull him up in his headlong course. "With the diamonds, Ebenezer Snipeton? Are you grown lunatic—doting? Diamonds, eternal diamonds, —diamonds everlasting as the sun—the spiritualised essence of Gain—diamonds for one flickering look; for one sick smile from withering lips? Have you forgotten the worth of wealth? Lost man! are you suddenly dead to arithmetic? Give diamonds to your wife? Pooh! pooh! As women love anything that glitters —and as moreover they love Jack-o'-lanthorns just as well as heaven's own stars—don't throw away the real treasure; but mock it; sham it; pass off a jeweller's lie, and let the picture blaze with the best and brightest paste. He 's a fool who throws pearls to pigs, and thinks the pork will eat the richer for the treasure. He 's no less a fool who showers diamonds upon his wife when, knowing no better, paste will make her just as grateful." And Snipeton gave all his ears to this scoundrel genius, that lived in his heart like a maggot in a nut, consuming and rotting it. There were times, though, when the genius slept; and then Snipeton—ignorant, unadvised man—was determined to be honest, generous. He would not countenance the fraud of false setting. No; his bird of Paradise; his lamb; his darling Clarissa; the queen flower in his life's garden—for she was this and all of these—should have the diamonds. Besides, if given to her, they were still his own; for according to the sweet rights of a husband, property so bestowed—with no parchment to bind it—might at any time be reclaimed by the lawful lord. After all, it was but lending his wife the diamonds; though—gentle simpleton! —she might still be tickled with the thought that they were wholly hers.

It was the morning after the visit of Crossbone; and Snipeton seated betimes at his cottage window — his eye first wandering among some flowers—his wife's only children as he once bitterly called them—and at length fixed upon the labours of a bee that toiled among the blossoms, taking sweet per-centage for its honey bank: it was at such a time that Snipeton again pondered on the diamonds. Again he revolved the special pleading of his thrifty genius: again attended to the counter-reasoning of his affections; allowing that he had them, and again allowing that affections do reason. He watched the bee—conscientious porter! —load itself to its utmost strength, and then buzz heavily through the casement. The insect had taken all it could carry. Wise, frugal, man-teaching insect. No: Snipeton would not give the diamonds. He would keep all he could: in his own grasp. All. And the determination, like a cordial, mightily comforted him.

At this moment Clarissa entered the room from her chamber.

Snipeton suddenly rose as to an angelic visitor. His wife looked so beautiful—so very beautiful. With such new sweetness in her face; such beaming mildness in her eyes; there was such grace in her motion, that love and vanity swelled in the old man's heart; and his hand strangely trembled as it greeted her. His prudential genius was on the sudden paralysed and dumb. Clarissa looked at her husband, as he thought, never before so lovingly—and for the moment, the miser glowed with the prodigal.

"Why, you are better, love; much better. Even Crossbone's talk has revived you. Ha! and we'll have this horse, and straightway: and—and the rose of my life will bloom again. Look here, my love." It was done: even at the last, one spasm of the heart it cost, but it was over. The miniature—that dia mond-circled piece of ivory and paint—was in Clarissa's hand. Astonished, happy, she said no word, but kissed the sudden gift; again and again kissed it, and her tears flowed. "I have often thought—indeed, have long determined to give it you," cried Snipeton.

"Thank—thank you, dear sir. Indeed, you have made me very happy," answered his wife.

His wife! Did she answer like his wife? Was it the voice of his twin soul—did the flesh of his flesh move with her lips? Was it his other incorporate self that spoke? Did he listen to the echoes of his own heart; or to the voice of an alien? When the devil jealousy begins to question, how rapid his interrogations!

"I tell you," said Snipeton, "I repeat—I have all along determined that you should have it; in good season, have it. Your father's picture, who with so great a right to it? He told me 'twas once your mother's. She wore it, till her death. Poor thing! He must have loved her very dearly. When he spoke of her, and never willingly, he would tremble as with the ague." Clarissa bowed her head; was silent; and again kissed the picture. "This fondness—these tears, Clarissa, must—if spirits know such matters—be precious to your father, now once more joined with your mother in heaven. Why, what 's the matter? So pale—so lily white; what is it, love?"

"Nothing, sir; nothing but the surprise—the joy at this gift," faintly answered Clarissa.

"Well, I see it has delighted you. I hoped so. Much delighted you: very much. You have kissed the picture fifty times, Clarissa. Is it not fifty—or have I falsely counted? Tell me. Fifty—is it not?"

"I cannot tell, sir," replied the wife, timidly. "Can they—ought they to be counted?"

"Why—but then, I am a cold arithmetician—I can count

them ; at least, all that fall to my lips. Can you not tell the number vouchsafed to the gift ? Strange ! I can count, ay, every one, bestowed upon the giver." Mournfully, and with some bitterness did Snipeton speak. His wife, with a slight tremor—suppressed by strong, sudden will—approached him. Pale, shuddering victim ! with mixed emotions fighting in her face, she bowed her head, and placing her cold arms about the old man's neck, she closed her eyes, and kissed his lips.

"Indeed, sir, I thank you. Pardon me ; indeed I thank you for this and all your goodness." She felt relieved ; she had paid the demanded debt.

And Snipeton—poor old man !—was he made happy by that caress ? How much real love was in it ? How much truth ? How much hypocrisy ? Or at the best, enforced obedience ? It came not from the heart : no ; it wanted blood and soul. It was not the fiery eloquence of love, telling a life's devotion with a touch. It was not that sweet communing of common thoughts, and common affections ; that deep, that earnest, and yet placid interchange of wedded soul with soul. In his heart, as in a crucible, the old man sought to test that kiss. Was it truth, or falsehood ? And as he pondered—how mysteriously are we fashioned !—a thing of forty years ago rose freshly to his mind. What brought it there ?—yet, there it was. The figure, the face of one who with proved perjury at his lips kissed the book, swearing the oath was true.

Clarissa saw her husband suddenly dashed with gloomy thoughts. They reproached her ; and, instinctively, she returned to the old man's side, and laying her hand upon his brow—had the hand been a sunbeam, it had not lighted the face more suddenly, brightly—she spoke to him very tenderly : "Are you not well, sir ?"

"Quite well ; always well, Clarissa, with you at my side—with you as even now." And she looked so cheerful, yes, so affectionate,—he had wronged her. He was a fool—an exacting fool—with no allowance for the natural reserve, the unconquerable timidity, of so gentle a creature. "And, as I was saying, you are better ; much better ; and we 'll have this horse ; and——but, Clary, love, we have forgotten breakfast." Resolved upon a full meal, Snipeton moved to the table ; and whilst he strove to eat, he talked quite carelessly, and, by the way, of a matter that a little disturbed him. "And how do you find Mrs. Wilton, eh, dearest ?"

Clarissa, with troubled looks, answered—"Find her, sir ? Is she not all we could wish ?"

"Oh, honest, quiet, and an excellent housekeeper, no doubt Do you know her story ?"

"Story, sir?" and Clarissa trembled as she spoke. "What story?"

"*Her* story? Has she not one? Everybody, it 's my opinion, has; but here 's the rub: everybody won't tell it, can't tell it, mustn't tell it. Is it not so?"

"It is never my thought, sir; my wish to question your experience. You know the world, you say. For my part, I never wish to know it. My hope is, to die in my ignorance."

"True; you are right; I would have it so. For it is a knowledge that—but no matter. My learning shall serve for both. Well, she never told you her story?" With this, Snipeton looked piercingly at his wife, who at first answered not. At length she asked, "Do you know it, sir?"

"No: but it is plain she has a story. I am firm in the faith."

"Some grief—some sacred sorrow, perhaps," said Clarissa. "We should respect it: should we not?"

"Why, grief and sorrow are convenient words, and often do duty for sin and shame," cried Snipeton.

"Sin and shame *are* grief and sorrow, or should be so," replied Clarissa, mournfully.

"Humph! Well, perhaps they are. However, Mrs. Wilton's story is no affair of ours," said Snipeton.

"Assuredly not," cried Clarissa, quickly.

"But her melancholy is. 'Tis catching; and infects you. Her bad spirits, her gloom, seem to touch all about her with mildew. A bad conscience—or a great grief—'tis no matter which, throws a black shadow about it; and to come at once to my meaning, Clarissa, I think Mrs. Wilton had better quit."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Clarissa. "'Twould break her heart—it would indeed, sir."

"It 's wonderful how long people live, ay, and enjoy themselves, too, with broken hearts, Clarissa. I 've often thought broken hearts were like broken china: to be put nicely together again, and—but for the look of the thing—to be quite as useful for all house-work as before. Now Mrs. Wilton's heart"—

"Do not speak of it. If—if you have any love for me, sir"—cried Clarissa.

"*If* I have love! Well, what think you? Have I not—even a few minutes since—given good proof?' It was somewhat distasteful to the old man, that after the gift of such diamonds, his love could be doubted. He had better have listened to his good, his wise, his profitable genius, and presented paste. How many wives—however badly used and industriously neglected—would still bestow their love! Now he, even with diamonds, could not buy it. For his wife to doubt his love, was to refuse her own.

This his philosophy made certain. And this after the diamonds!

"Nay, I am sure of your love, sir; certain; most confident," said Clarissa, very calm in such assurance. "And therefore know you will refuse me nothing. Eh, dear sir?"

Again Snipeton's heartstrings relaxed; again, listening to the music of the enchantress, his darker thoughts began to pass away, and his soul enjoyed new sunlight. "Nothing—nothing," he said, "that is healthful."

"Then promise me that Mrs. Wilton shall remain. Indeed, you know not how much I have learned of her; how much she loves me; how much she respects you."

"Respect is a cold virtue, I know, Clarissa; very cold. Now, with her 'tis freezing. I sometimes think she looks at me, as though—but I 'll say no more. She blights your spirits; darkens your thoughts with her sorrow or her sin, or whatever it may be; and, in a word, she shall stay no longer. I am resolved."

"Blights me! Darkens my thoughts! Oh, sir, I would you heard her talk. I would you knew the pains she takes to make me happy; to make me cheerful; to place all things in the happiest light, shedding, as she does, the beauty of her spirit over all. Doubtless, she has suffered, but——"

"But—but she goes. I am resolved, Clarissa; she goes. Resolved, I say."

And Ebenezer Snipeton struck the table with his fist; and threw himself back in his chair, as he believed, a statue of humanity, hardened by resolution into flint. And very proud he felt of the petrifaction. Nor lightnings, nor thunderbolts should melt or move him.

Clarissa—her suit was for a mother—rose from her chair, and stood beside her husband. She threw her arms about his neck. Flint as he was he felt they were not so lumpish, clay-like as when last they lay there. "Dear sir, you 'll not refuse me this? You 'll not refuse me?" And Clarissa for once looked full in the eyes of her husband.

"Resolved," said Snipeton thickly; and something rose in his throat. "Resolved."

"No; no. You must promise me—you shall not leave me without," and the arms pressed closer; and the flint they embraced became soft as any whetstone. "You will not deprive me of her solicitude—her affection?" Snipeton answered not; when Clarissa—in such a cause what cared she for the sacrifice?—stooping, kissed her husband with a deep and fervent affection for her mother. And the statue was suddenly turned to thrilling flesh: had the old man's heart been stuck with thorns, his wife's

lips would have drawn them all away, and made it beat with burning blood. The man was kissed for an old woman; but he set the rapture to his own account, and was directly rich with imaginary wealth. Need we say the man consented? What otherwise could strong resolution do?

A new man, with a newer, brighter world beaming about him, Snipeton that day departed from his rustic home to St. Mary Axe. His wife seemed to travel with him, he was so haunted by her looks of new-born love. And now he hummed some ancient, thoughtless song; and now he smacked his lips, as with freshened recollection of the touch that had enriched them. The mist and cloud of doubt that had hung about his life had passed away, and he saw peacefulness and beauty clearly to the end. And these thoughts went with him to his dark and dismal city nook, and imparted deeper pleasures even to the bliss of money-making.

This once, at least, St. Giles was in luck. A few minutes only after Snipeton's arrival, with his new happiness fresh upon him, the young man presented himself with a letter from Crossbone. "He looks an honest fellow; a very honest fellow," thought Snipeton, eyeing him. "'Tis a bad world; a wicked world; yet, when all 's said, there are some honest people; yes, there must be some." And this charitable thought enhanced for the nonce St. Giles. He could not have come in happier season. "Humph! and you have known Mr. Crossbone some time? To be sure, he told me, from a child. And your father was killed, trying to do good? That 's hard; plaguy hard; for people ar'n't often killed in that humour. And you 've been kind—very kind to your mother? Well, that 's something; I think I may trust you. Yes: you may consider yourself engaged. When can you come?"

"Directly, sir," said St. Giles; who had been duly impressed by Crossbone with the necessity of obtaining Snipeton's patronage; it was so very essential to the happiness of his lordship. "Be vigilant, be careful," thus had run the apothecary's counsel, "and his lordship will make a man of you!" What a golden prospect for one who, with the hopes and worthy desires of a man, knew himself to be a social wolf in the human fold; a thing to be destroyed, hung up; a wholesome example to runaway vagabonds. To be made a man of, what a load must he lay down! What a joy, a blessing, to stand erect in the world—and be allowed to meet the eyes of men with confiding looks! Now, he crept and crawled; and felt that his soul went upon all-fours. Now, he at times shrunk from a sudden gaze, as from a drawn knife. And his lordship would make a man of him! Glorious labour, this; divine handiwork! And there is plenty of such labour, too, in

this broad world, if we had but the earnest-hearted workers to grapple with it. How many thousand thousands of human animals; creatures of outward humanity; beings on two legs, are yet to be made men of! Again, what is a man? You, reader, may possibly have a pretty correct notion of what he is, or ought to be: now, Mr. Crossbone's ideal of a perfect man was but of a perfect rascal. He would make a man as he would have made a gin, a trap; the more perfect the snare, the nobler the humanity. And in this sense was St. Giles to be elevated into a man, for the direct advantage of the young lord, and the supplementary benefit of the apothecary. And St. Giles himself—it must not be forgotten—had some misgivings of the model-excellence after which he was to be fashioned. It just passed through his brain that the man he was to be made, might be a man, if not nearer to the gallows than himself, at least a man more deserving (if any deserved it) the elevation. There seemed to him new peril to be made a man of. Yet, what could he do? Nothing. He must wait; watch; and take the chances as they fell.

Snipeton read the letter. Nothing could have fallen out so luckily. A friend of Crossbone's—a man of honour though he dealt in horseflesh—had a beautiful thing to sell; a thing of lamb-like gentleness and beauty. The very thing for Mrs. Snipeton. A mare that might be reined with a thread of silk. Moreover, Mr. Snipeton might have the beast at his own price; and that, of course, would be next to no price at all.

"Do you understand horses, my man?" asked Snipeton, as he finished the letter.

"Why, yes, sir," answered St. Giles; and he must have answered yes, had the question been of unicorns.

"Well, then"—but at this moment, Snipeton's man brought in the names of Capstick and Tangle. To the great relief of St. Giles, he was ordered into an adjoining room, there to wait. He withdrew as the new visitors entered.

"Mr. Snipeton, this—this"—why did Capstick pause?—"this gentleman is Mr. Tangle, attorney"—

"Solicitor," was Mr. Tangle's meek correction. "It 's of no consequence, but—solicitor."

"Pooh, pooh! It isn't my way, sir. I always say 'attorney,' and then we know the worst," said Capstick.

"I have heard of Mr. Tangle. We never met before—but his reputation has reached me," sneered Snipeton.

"Reputation, sir," observed Capstick, "is sometimes like a polecat; dead or alive, its odour will spread."

"Very true; it is; it has," was the corroboration of Snipeton; and Tangle, though he tried to smile, fidgetted uneasily.

"You are, perhaps, not aware, Mr. Snipeton, that a petition is to be presented to the House of Commons—my House—for the purpose of turning out its present patriotic member for Liquorish?" said Capstick.

"Indeed! Upon what ground?" inquired Snipeton.

"Bribery. Would you imagine it? Could you think it? Charge me with bribery!" said the member.

"Pardon me. Not you; oh, by no means! We never do that. We 're not so ill-bred. No, sir, the crime—that is, the statutable crime—for morals and statutes, sir, are sometimes very different things—the crime of bribery is laid at the door of Mr. Capstick's agents. His agents, sir," said Tangle.

"I had none: none whatever. It is my pride—if, indeed, a man should be proud of anything in this dirty, iniquitous world—a world of flip-flaps and somersets—my pride, that I was returned purely upon my own merits; if, indeed, I have merits; a matter I am sometimes inclined to doubt, when I wake up from my first sleep. *I* go into Parliament upon bribery! I should think myself one big blotch—a human boil. No; I can lay my hand upon my breast—just where I carry my pocket-book—and answer it, before the world,—except the price of the hackney coach that carried me to the House, my seat didn't cost me sixpence."

"Ha, Mr. Capstick!" cried Tangle, half closing his eyes; "you don't know what friends you had."

"Yes, sir, I do; for I 've been intimate with them all my life. Integrity, honour, out-speaking"— Capstick paused; and the next moment blushed, as though detected in some gross fault. The truth is, he was ashamed of himself for the vain-boasting. Integrity and honour! Supposing that he had them—what then? Was it a matter to make a noise about? Capstick blushed; then hurriedly said—"I beg your pardon. Go on with the bribery."

"And so they want to turn you out, eh?" cried Snipeton. "The house of St. James can't swallow the muffin-maker. Ha! ha! I can only wish you had been a chimney-sweeper. 'Twould have been a sweeter triumph."

"I am quite contented, Mr. Snipeton," said Capstick, majestically, "as it is. Not that, as one of the social arts, I despise chimney-sweeping. By no means. For there may be cases in which it would not be such dirty work to clean folk's chimneys, as to sweep their pockets."

"True; very true," said Snipeton, who never selfishly took a sarcasm to himself, when, as he thought, so many of his fellow-creatures equally well deserved it. "And so to the bribery. We must meet this petition."

"I thought so; and therefore waited upon Mr. Capstick to

offer my professional services. You see, sir, I have peculiar advantages—very peculiar. For although, by that unfortunate and most mysterious robbery of the gold, the bribery—on the part of his lordship—was limited, rather limited; nevertheless, I have here, sir,—here"—and Tangle tapped at his breast—"such facts, that"—

"I see," said Snipeton; "and you 'll turn yourself inside out to oblige us?"

"I am a free agent; quite free. Being no longer his lordship's legal adviser—you wouldn't think that that paltry box of gold could have parted us: but so it is—there is no gratitude in the great;—being, as I say, free, sir; and in the possession of secrets"—

"If you want a cheap pennyworth of dirt you can buy it—you can buy it," said Capstick.

"Mr. Capstick!" exclaimed Tangle with a darkly solemn face, "Mr. Capstick"—but the attorney thought it not profitable to be indignant; therefore he suffered a smile to overflow his cheek, as he continued—"Mr. Capstick, you 're a wag." But Tangle had in this a secret consolation: for in his legal opinion he had as good as called the muffin-maker "thief and housebreaker." Tangle then proceeded. "What I shall do, I shall do for justice. And public justice, with her scales"—

"Bless my soul! I 'd quite forgot the girl. Mr. Snipeton, your maid-of-all-work from Kent is below. A droll business. Quite an escape, poor thing! But she 'll tell your wife all about it," said Capstick.

"Your pardon. Just one minute;" whereupon Snipeton repaired to St. Giles. "You know my house? Mind, I don't want all the world to know it. Well, make the best of your way there, and—stop. Come down stairs." And Snipeton left the room, St. Giles following him. St. Giles—so Snipeton determined—should at once escort the wench to Hampstead. Another minute, and to the joy and ill-concealed astonishment of the pair, the girl saw in St. Giles the wanderer and vagrant to whom she had given the shelter of a barn—and he beheld in his new fellow-servant, Becky, the soft-hearted maiden of the Lamb and Star.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"What is it you look at so earnestly?" asked Mrs. Wilton: and Clarissa, with a flushed cheek, placed the miniature in her bosom. Snipeton had just quitted the house—for we must take back the reader to that point of time—and Clarissa sat, with her heart in her eyes, gazing at the youthful features of her father. As she looked, with fond curiosity comparing those features, in their early bloom and strength, tempered with gentle frankness; as she gazed upon their manly, loving openness, and, with her memory, evoked that melancholy, care-worn face, that, smiling on nought beside, would always smile on her, she felt—she shuddered—but still she felt anger, bitterness towards her mother. Her eye, reading that face, could see where pain had given a sharper edge to time: could see where, in the living face, care had doubled the work of years. Surely, she thought, so fair a morning promised a fairer night. That glad and happy day should have closed with a golden sunset, touching with solemn happiness all it shone upon, as slowly from the earth it passed in glory. These were the daughter's thoughts as she heard her mother's voice. A momentary resentment glowed in her cheek—darkened her eyes.

"Clarissa!"

"It is nothing—a—a present from Mr. Snipeton—from my husband," said Clarissa coldly. Her mother took her daughter's hand between her own. Affectionately pressing it, and with all a mother's tenderness beaming in her face—the only look hypocrisy could never yet assume—she said, "It is well, Clarissa—very well. It makes me happy, deeply happy, to hear you. I think it is the first time you have said 'husband.'"

"Is it so? I cannot tell. The word escaped me. Yet I—must learn to speak it."

"Oh, yes, Clarissa. Make it the music of your life! Think it a charm that, when pronounced, makes all earth's evils less—doubling its blessings. A word that brings with it a sense of joy; a strength; a faith in human existence. A word that may clothe beggary itself with content, and make a hut a temple. You may still pronounce it. Oh, never, never may you know what agony it is, to forego that word. The living makes it a blessing; and the dead sanctifies and hallows it."

Clarissa felt conscience-smitten, stung with remorse. All heed-

lessly, cruelly, she had arraigned her mother ; thoughtless of the daily misery that wore her :. regardless of the penitence that corroded and consumed her. "Forgive me," she said : "forgive me, mother. I will lay this lesson to my heart. I will learn to speak the word. You shall still teach me its sustaining sweetness."

"A most unfit teacher ; most unfit," said the mother, with an appealing look of anguish. "Your own heart will best instruct you." And then, with resolute calmness, she asked : "What is this present ? "

"You shall not know to-day ; by-and-by, mother. And I have a present, too, for you," said Clarissa ; and she looked so light, so happy, that her mother for the first time dared to hope. Did the young victim feel at length the wife ? Would that seeming life-long sorrow pass away, and the sunshine of the heart break in that clouded face ?

"I will be patient, child ; nay, I will promise what you will, I feel so grateful that I see you thus cheerful—happy. Shall I not say, happy, Clarissa ? "

"Oh yes ; very happy," answered the wife ; and a sudden pang of heart punished the treason of the lips. "But I must not be idle to-day, I have so much to do." And Clarissa seated herself at her work ; and the mother silently occupied herself. And so, hour after hour passed, and scarce a word was spoken. At length Dorothy Vale, with noiseless step and folded arms, stood in the room.

"They be come," said Dorothy, with unmoved face, rubbing her arms.

"Who are come ?" asked Clarissa.

"Why, Becky be come, and a man with her," answered Dorothy ; and—it was strange—but her voice seemed to creak with suppressed anger.

"I am glad of that," said Clarissa ; "tell the girl to come to me —directly, Dorothy."

Dorothy stood, rubbing her withered arms with renewed purpose. Her brow wrinkled, and her grey, cold eyes gleamed, like sharp points, in her head ; then she laughed. "She was brought up in the workhouse : and to be put over my head ! Well, it 's a world ! The workhouse ; and put over my head ! " Thus muttering, she left the room. In a moment, Becky—possessed with delight, swimming in a sea of happiness—was curtseying before her new mistress. Now, were we not assured, past all error, that it was the same country wench that half laughed at, half listened to, the flatteries of the deceitful Gum, we should deny her identity with that radiant piece of flesh and blood, that, glowing

with felicity, bobbed and continually bobbed before Mrs. Snipeton. Certainly, there is a subtle power of refinement in happiness: a something elevating, purifying, in that expansion of the heart. Sudden bliss invests with sudden grace; and gives to homeliness itself a look of sweetness. The soul, for a brief time, flashes forth with brighter light; asserting itself—as human pride is sometimes apt to think—in the vulgarest, oddest sort of people. And so it was with Becky. To be sure, all the way from St. Mary Axe—hanging, and sometimes at puddles and crossings, with all her weight on the arm of St. Giles, she had felt the refining process hinted at above. St. Giles had talked on what he thought indifferent matters: but the weather, the shops, the passers-by—whatever his silver tongue dwelt upon—became objects of the dearest interest to the hungry listener; who now laughed, she knew not why, from her over-brimming heart; and now had much ado to check her tears, that—she knew it—had risen to her eyes, and threatened to flow. She walked in a region of dreams; and intoxicating music broke at every footstep. Could it be true—could it be real—that that wayfaring, wretched man; that unhappy creature, with all the world hooting at him, chasing him to destruction, like a rabid cur, that vagabond, to a suspicious world, dyed in murderous blood, was the trim, handsome—to her, how beautiful!—young fellow walking at her side; and now and then smiling so kindly upon her that her heart seemed to grow too big with the blessing? And oh—extravagant excess of happiness!—he was to be her fellow-servant! He would dwell under the same roof with her! Now she was steeped in bliss: and now, a shadow fell upon her. Yes: it could not be. The happiness was too full; all too complete to endure.

And yet the bliss continued—nay, increased. Mrs. Snipeton, that creature of goodness; that angel of Becky's morning dreams—gave smiling welcome to her new handmaid; greeted her with kindest words; and, more than all, looked cordially on St. Giles, who could not remain outside, but sidled into the room to pay his duty to his handsome mistress. The sweetness with which she spoke to both seemed to the heart of Becky to unite both. The girl's affection for St. Giles—until that moment unknown to her in its strength—appeared sanctioned by the equal smiles of her lady.

At this juncture, a new visitor—with a confidence which he was wont to wear, as though it mightily became him—entered the room, passing before the slow domestic, leisurely bent upon heralding his coming. Mr. Crossbone was again in presence of his patient; again had his finger on her pulse; again looked with professional anxiety in Mrs. Snipeton's face; as though his only thought, his only mission in this world was to continually act the

part of her healing angel. "Better, much better, my dear Mrs. Snipeton. Yes; we shall be all right, now: very soon all right. And I have brought you the best medicine in the world. Bless me!"—and Crossbone stared at Becky—"the little wench from the Dog and Moon."

"Lamb and Star, sir," said Becky. "Wonder you 've forgot the house, sir; wonder you 've forgot Mrs. Blick and all the babies."

"I think it was the Lamb and Star," said Crossbone; but when we consider that the apothecary had already promised himself a carriage in London, can we wonder that he should have forgotten the precise sign; that he should have forgotten the poor children (weeds that they were) who owed to him an introduction into this over-peopled world? "You are a fortunate young woman, that you have been promoted from such a place to your present service. One always has one's doubts of the lower orders; nevertheless, I hope you 'll be grateful." And the apothecary looked the patron.

"I hope she ool," said Dorothy, with a sneer; and as she turned from the room, she went muttering along—"She was born in the workhouse, and to be put over my head!"

"I have great faith in Becky; she 'll be a good, a prudent girl; I am sure of it. You may go now, child, to Dorothy. Bear with her temper a little, and soon she 'll be your friend." And with this encouragement, Becky left her mistress, seeking the kitchen, hopeful and happy, as pilgrims seek a shrine. In a moment she had resolved with herself to be a wonder of fidelity and patience. And then for Dorothy, though the girl could not promise herself to love her very much, nevertheless, she determined to be to her a pattern of obedience. "She may walk over me if she likes, and I won't say nothing," was Becky's resolution; should Dorothy, from the capriciousness of ill-temper, resolve upon such enjoyment; walking over people, giving at times, it must be owned, a strange satisfaction to the tyranny of the human heart. Now Becky, though she had at least nine thousand out of the nine thousand and three good qualities that, according to the calculation of an anonymous philosopher, fall, a natural dower, to the lot of woman, was not ordinarily so much distinguished by meekness as by any other of the nameless crowd of good gifts. Ordinarily, any attempt "to walk over her," would have been a matter of extreme difficulty to the stoutest pedestrian; but Becky was mollified, subdued. Her heart was newly opened, and gushed with tenderness. She felt herself soothed to any powers of endurance. The house was made such a happy, serious place to her by the presence of St. Giles. He would live there; he would be her

daily sight; her daily music; and with that thought, all the world might walk over her, and she would not complain the value of a single word. She was astonished at her own determined meekness; she could never have believed it.

"And Mr. Snipeton—excellent man!—has hired you?" And Crossbone looked up and down at St. Giles. "I trust, young man, you 'll do no discredit to my good word. It 's a risk, a great risk, at any time to answer for folks of your condition; but I have ventured for the sake of—of your poor father." St. Giles winced. "I hope you 'll show yourself worthy of that honest man. Though he was one of the weeds of the world, nevertheless, I don't know how it was, but I 'd have trusted him with untold gold. So, you 'll be sober and attentive in this house; study the interests of your master, the wishes of your excellent mistress who stands before you; and, yes, you 'll also continue to be kind to your mother. And now, you 'd better go and look to the horse that I 've left at the garden gate." St. Giles, glad of the dismissal, hurried from the room. He had coloured and looked confused, and shifted so uneasily where he stood, that he feared his mistress might note his awkwardness; and thus suspect him for the lies of the apothecary—for whom St. Giles, in the liberality of his shamefacedness, blushed exceedingly. Great, however, was the serenity of Crossbone on all such occasions. Indeed, he took the same pleasure in falsehood that an epicure receives from a well-seasoned dish. He looked upon lies as the pepper, the spices of daily life; they gave a relish to what would otherwise be flat and insipid. Hence, he would now and then smack his lips at a bouncing flam, as though throughout his whole moral and physical anatomy, he hugely enjoyed it: flourished, and grew fat upon it.

"And now, my dear Mrs. Snipeton—Mrs. Wilton, with your leave, I 'll talk a little with my patient;" and Crossbone, with an imperious smile, waved his hand towards the door. Mrs. Wilton stirred not from her sewing; said not a word; but looked full in the face of her daughter.

"Oh no; certainly not," said Clarissa; "Mrs. Wilton has had too much trouble with her invalid, to refuse to listen to any further complaints; though, indeed, sir," said Clarissa significantly, "I fear 'tis your anxiety alone that makes them so very—very dangerous."

"Ha! my dear madam. You are not aware of it—patients arn't aware of it—perhaps it is wisely ordered so—but the eye of the true doctor can see, madam—can see."

"Pray go on, sir," said Clarissa; and Crossbone, a little puzzled, needed such encouragement.

And with erudite discourse did Crossbone strive to entertain his patient; who endured, with fullest female resignation, the learning of the doctor.

St. Giles, leaving the house, hurried through the garden to take charge of the horse. Arrived at the gate, he saw the animal led by a man down the road, at a greater distance from the house than was necessary for mere exercise. Immediately he ran off, calling to the fellow who led the animal; but the man, although he slackened his pace, never turned his head or answered a syllable. "Hallo, my man!" cried St. Giles, "where are you leading that?"—and then he paused; for Tom Blast slowly turned himself about, and letting the bridle fall in his arms, stared at the speaker.

"Why, what's the matter, mate? I'm only taking care o' the gentleman's horse; jest walking him that he mayn't catch cold. You don't think I'd steal him, do you?" asked Blast, winking.

"What—what brings you here again, Blast?" stammered St. Giles, scarce knowing what he said.

"What brings me here? Why, bread brings me here. Bread o' any sort, or any colour; dry bread at the best; for I can't get it buttered like some folks. Well, it's like the world. No respect for old age, when it walks arm in arm with want; no honour or nothin' o' that sort paid to grey hairs,—when there's no silver in the pocket. Well, I must say it—I can't help it, tho' it goes to my art to say it—but the sooner I'm out o' this world the better, for I'm sick of men. Men! They're wipers with legs," and the inimitable hypocrite spoke with so much passion, so much seeming sincerity, that St. Giles was for a moment confounded by a vague sense of ingratitude; for a moment he ceased to remember that the old crime-grained man before him had been the huckster of his innocence, his liberty, —had made him the banned creature that he was, breathing a life of doubt and terror.

"What do you want? What will satisfy you?" asked St. Giles, despairingly.

"Ha! now you talk with some comfort in your voice. What will satisfy me? There is some sense in that. Now you remind me of a little boy that was the apples of my eyes, and would have been the very likes o' you, but—well, I won't talk of that, for it always makes my throat burn, and makes the world spin round me like a top. I don't want much. No; I've outlived all the rubbish and gingerbread of life, and care for nothing but the simple solids. It's a wonder, young man, what time does with us. How, as I may say, it puts spectacles to our eyes, and makes

us look into mill-stones. What will satisfy me? Well, I do think I could go to the grave decent on a guinea a week."

"Very likely; I should think so," said St. Giles.

"A guinea a-week, paid reglar on Saturdays. For regularity doubles the sum. I might ha' saved as much for my old age, for the money that 's been through my hands in my time. Only the drawback upon thieving is this, there 's nothing certain in it. No man, let him be as steady as old times, no man as is a thief"—

"Hush! somebody may hear you," cried St. Giles, looking terrified about him.

"I 'm speakin' of a man's misfortun, not his fault," cried the immovable Blast; "no man as is a thief can lay up for a decent old age. Have what luck we will, that 's where the honest fellars get the better on us. And so you see, instead o' having nothin' to do but smoke my pipe and go to the public-house, I 'm obligated in my old age to crawl about and hold horses, and do anything; and anything is always the worst paid work a man can take money for. Now, with a guinea a week, would'nt I be a happy, quiet, nice, old gen'leman! Don't you think it 's in me, eh, young man?"

"I wish you had it," said St. Giles. "I wish so with all my heart. But give me the bridle."

"By no means," said Blast. "How do I know you was sent for the horse? How do I know you mightn't want to steal it?"

"Steal it!" cried St. Giles, and the thought of the past made him quiver with indignation.

"Why, horses are stole," observed Mr. Blast, with the serenity of a philosophical demonstrator. "Look here, now: if I was to give up this horse, what hinders you—I don't say you would do it—but what hinders you from taking a quiet gallop to Smithfield, and when you got there, selling him to some old gentleman, and"—

"Silence! Devil! beast!" exclaimed St. Giles, raising his fist at the tormentor.

"No, no; you don't mean it,"—said Blast—"you wouldn't hit a old man like me, I know you wouldn't. 'Cause if you was only to knock me down, I know I should call out, I couldn't help myself. And then, somebody might come up; p'raps a constable; and then—oh! I 'm as close as a cockle with a secret, I am, when I 'm not put upon, but when my blood 's up,—bless your soul, I know my weakness, I 'd hang my own brother. I should be very sorry, in course, arterwards; but he 'd swing—as I 'm a living sinner, he 'd swing," and Blast, as he stared at St. Giles, gently smacked his lips, and gently rubbed his palms together.

"I ask your pardon; I didn't know what I said. Here 's a shilling; now give me the bridle," said St. Giles.

"I s'pose it 's all right," said Blast, rendering up his charge, and significantly eyeing the coin. "I s'pose it 's all right; but only to think of this world! Only to think that you should give me a shilling for holding a horse! Well, if a man could only know it, wouldn't it break his heart outright to look at the bits o' boys that, afore he died, would be put clean over his head? It 's a good shillin', isn't it?"

"To be sure it is; and an honest one, too," said St. Giles.

"Glad to hear that; tho' I don't know it will go a penny the further. I wish the colour had been yellow, eh?"

"I wish so, too, for your sake. Good day," and St. Giles sought to shake his evil genius off.

"I 'm in no hurry. Time 's no good to me: you may have the pick of any of the four-and-twenty hours at your own price," said Blast, following close at his side. "And so, they 've turned you over from St. James's-square to the old money-grubber? Well, he 's very rich; though I don't think the sops in the pan will be as many as you 'd been greased with at his lordship's. For all that, he 's very rich: and you wouldn't think what a lot of plate the old man 's got."

"How do you know that?" asked St. Giles.

"I dream'd it only last night. I had a wision, and I thought that the mother of little Jingo"——

"Don't talk of it, man—don't talk of it," exclaimed St. Giles, "I won't hear it."

"I must talk on it," said Blast, sidling the closer, and striding as St. Giles strode. "I must talk on it It comforts me. I dreamed that the poor soul come to me, and told me to follow her, and took me into old Snipeton's cottage there, and showed me the silver tankards, and silver dishes, and even counted up the silver tea-spoons, that there was no end of; and then, when she 'd put all the plate afore me, she vanished off, and I was left alone with it. In course you know what followed."

"I can guess," groaned St. Giles.

"How rich I was while I was snoring, last night; and when I woke I was as poor as goodness. But somehow, my dream 's fell true—I can't help thinking it—since I 've fell in with you."

"How so, man? What have I to do with Mr. Snipeton's plate, but to see nobody steals it?" said St. Giles, firmly.

"To be sure; and yet when there 's so much silver about, and a guinea a week—well, I 'll say a pound, then—a pound a week would make a fellow-cretur happy, and silent for life—I said, silent for life"—

St. Giles suddenly paused, and turned full upon Blast. "Go your ways, man—go your ways. Silent or not silent, you do not frighten me. What I may do for you, I'll do of my own free will, and with my own money, such as it is. And, after all, I think 't will serve you better to hold your tongue, than"—

"I wouldn't kill the goose for all the eggs at once," said Blast, grinning at the figure.

St. Giles felt deadly sick. He had thought to brave—defy the ruffian; but the power of the villain, the fate that with a word he could call down upon his victim, unnerved him. St. Giles, with entreating looks, motioned him away; and Blast, leering at him, and then tossing up the shilling with his finger and thumb, passed on, leaving St. Giles at the garden-gate, where stood Clarissa, brought there by the earnest entreaties of Crossbone, to view the horse—the wondrous steed that was to endow its mistress with new health and beauty.

"You may see at a glance, madam, there 's Arab blood in the thing; and yet as gentle as a rabbit. Young man, just put her through her paces. Bless you! she 'd trot over eggs, and never crack 'em. A lovely mare!" cried Crossbone, "all her brothers and sisters, I 'm assured of it, in the royal stables."

"I 'm afraid, too beautiful—much too spirited for me, sir," said Clarissa, as St. Giles ambled the creature to and fro. Ere, however, Crossbone could make reply—assuring the lady, as he proposed to do, that she would sit the animal as securely and withal as gracefully as she would sit a throne,—Mr. Snipeton, full of the dust and cobwebs of St. Mary Axe, trotted to the gate. His first feeling was displeasure, when he saw his wife exposed beneath the open sky to the bold looks of any probable passenger; and then she turned such a kind and cordial face upon him, that, for the happy moment, he could have wished all the dwellers of the earth spectators of her beauty, beaming as it did upon her glorified husband. It was plain: love so long dormant, timid within her bosom, now flew boldly to her eyes, and curved her lips, with fondest looks and sweetest smiles for her wedded lord. We have before declared that Snipeton had an intimate acquaintance with his own ugliness: unlike so many who carry the disadvantage with them through life, yet are never brought to a personal knowledge of it, Snipeton knew his plainness: it was not in the power of mirrors to surprise and annoy him. And yet, in his old age, he would feel as though his ugliness was, by some magic, lessened, nay, refined into comeliness, when his wife smiled upon him. His face, for the time, seemed to wear her light. And thus did this new belief in her affection give the old man a certain

faith in his amended plainness; as though beauty beautified what it loved.

"There, Mr. Snipeton—there 's a treasure. A lovely thing, eh?" cried the triumphant Crossbone.

"Very handsome, very; but is she well broken—is she quite safe?" said Snipeton, looking tenderly at his wife.

"A baby might rein her. No more tricks than a judge; no more vice than a lady of quality."

"Humph!" said Snipeton, dismounting, and giving his horse to St. Giles. "My dear, you will catch cold." And then the ancient gentleman placed his arm around his wife's waist, and led her from the gate; Crossbone following, and staring at the endearment with most credulous looks. It was so strange, so odd; it seemed as if Snipeton had taken a most unwarrantable liberty with the lady of the house. And then the apothecary comforted himself with the belief that Mrs. Snipeton only suffered the tenderness for the sake of appearances: no; it was some satisfaction to know she could not love the man. "And your new maid is come. She seems simple and honest," said Snipeton.

"Oh, yes: a plain, good-tempered soul, that will exactly serve us," answered Clarissa.

"Very good—very good." And Snipeton turned into the house. He had thought again to urge his dislike of Mrs. Wilton; to suggest her dismissal; but he would take another opportunity—for go she should: he was determined, but would await his time. As these thoughts busied him, Mrs. Wilton entered the room, followed by Crossbone. Somewhat sullenly, Snipeton gazed at the housekeeper: and then his eyes became fiery, and pointing to the riband that Clarissa had hung about her mother's neck—the riband bearing the miniature, yet unseen by the wearer, he passionately asked—"Where got you that? Woman! Thief! Where stole you that?"

"Stole!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton, and she turned deathly pale; and on the instant tore the riband from her neck; and then, for the first time, saw the miniature. For a moment, her face was livid with agony, that seemed to tongue-tie her, and then she shrieked—"Oh, God! and is it he?"

"Detected! detected!" cried Snipeton—"a detected thief."

"No, sir; no," exclaimed Clarissa, embracing her parent. "You shall now know all. She is"—

Clarissa was about to acknowledge her mother, when the wretched woman clasped her daughter's head to her bosom, stifling the words. "No thief, sir," she said, "but no longer your servant. And then, kissing Clarissa, and murmuring—"not a word—not one word," the mother hurried from the room.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Snipeton liked to be duped. He hugged himself in the knowledge of his weakness, mightily enjoying it. And so, he suffered his wife to nestle close to his chair—to place her hand upon his shoulder—to look with earnest, pleading eyes upon him—to talk such fluent sweetness, melting his heart! And whilst Clarissa assured him that, in a playful moment, she had placed the miniature about the housekeeper's neck, that it was a wickedness, a calumny, to think otherwise,—that, in very truth, it would cause her—his wife, the wife he so professed to love—such pain and remorse to think suspiciously of Mrs. Wilton,—Snipeton, that learned man as he deemed himself in the worst learning of the world—that sage, who picked his way through the earth as though its fairest places were all the closelier set with gins and snares,—he would not see the sweet deceit in his wife's face; he would not hear the charitable falsehood flowing from her lips: no, he would be filled with belief. He would commit a violence upon his prudence and blindfold her. She might rebel and struggle somewhat: nevertheless, she should wear the bandage.

This wise determination still grew in his heart; in truth, the soil was favourable to the deceit; and therefore, next morning, enjoying the amenities of breakfast, Mr. Snipeton assured his wife that—whatever his thoughts had been—he now felt the deepest, sweetest confidence in Mrs. Wilton. She had shown herself a most considerate gentlewoman, and he should ever respect her for it. "Poor thing! I never knew anything of her private history—for private histories, my dear"—this tenderness had become almost familiar to the husband—"private histories are very often like private wasps' nests; things of danger, with no profit in 'em: nevertheless, she always appeared to me too good—yes, too good for her situation. That's always a pity," and Snipeton continued to breakfast very heartily.

"True, husband, true," said Clarissa; "such inequalities of fortune are very sad."

"Very inconvenient," cried Snipeton; "for you see, my dear, people who are too good for their employment, are generally too bad for their employers. There is no such lumber in the world as broken-down gentility. Always out of place—never fit for anything. A decayed gentleman, as he 's called, is a nuisance; that is, a nuisance to a man of the world—to a man of business. For you see, there's always impertinence in him. He always seems to be

thinking of what he has been—you can't get him to think of what he is. He becomes your clerk, we 'll say. Well, you tell him to call a hackney-coach, and he sets about it in a manner that impudently says to you—'Once I kept my own carriage!' You order him to copy a letter or what not; and he draws down the corners of his mouth to let you know that—'Once in his day, he used to write cheques!' Now this is unpleasant. In the first place one doesn't like any insolence from anybody; and in the next, if one happens to be in a melancholy, thinking mood, one doesn't like to be reminded by the bit of decay about one, what, for all one knows—for it 's a strange world—one may drop down to one's self. A decayed gentleman to a rich man is—well—he 's like a dead thief on a gibbet to the live highwayman. Ha! ha! What's the matter?"—asked the mirthful man, for he saw Clarissa shudder at the illustration, though so very truthful and excellent to the maker. "To be sure, I 'd forgot; you've a tender heart—I love you all the better for it—and don't like to hear about such matters. And then again I'd forgot—to be sure, what a fool I am ' "—And then Mr. Snipeton remembered that, in his virtuous denunciation of bankrupt Plutus, he had forgotten—led away by the dazzling light of simile—the condition of Clarissa's father: had, in the heat of speech, failed to remember that he had bought the bridal victim of the necessities of her parent. But, Mr. Snipeton, as he thought, made immediate amends. For taking his wife's hand, he pressed it very tenderly; kissed her, and then repeated—"What a fool I am!"

(Now this confession—a confession that the very wisest of us might, without any hesitation make to himself three times a day; and we much question whether the discipline so exercised would not carry with it more profitable castigation than aught laid on with knotted rope—this confession was not to be expected of so sage and close a man as Ebenezer Snipeton. Some sudden satisfaction must have betrayed him into the avowal: some unexpected pleasure, tripping up habitual gravity, and showing its unthought-of weakness. Much, indeed, did the wife of his bosom, as he would call her—and why not? for do not rocks bear flowers?—much did she marvel at the humility of her husband that, even for a moment, placed him on the flat level with other men. But great happiness, like great sorrow, will sometimes knock the stilts from under us; admirable stilts, upon which so many of us walk abroad, aye, and at home too: though the world, provoking in its blindness, will often not perceive how very tall we are.)

"But the truth is, dear Clarissa"—continued Snipeton—"I had a sort of respect for Mrs. Wilton, and though I often spoke

of it, I really had not the heart to turn her from the house. I often threatened it: but it 's a comfort to know it—I couldn't have done it. Now she's gone, I feel it."

"Gone!" exclaimed Clarissa.

"Discharged herself, my dear," said Snipeton, as upon his defence. "I found this upon the breakfast table." Hereupon, Snipeton, unfolding a note, placed it in his wife's hand. Silently, with trickling tears, she gazed upon the paper. "I shall have no objection to give her a character; none at all: for I feel very easy about the plate. I've no doubt, though I've made no inquiry as yet, that all 's safe to a salt-spoon. Not that she tells us where she's gone; nevertheless, I feel my heart at ease about the property. Come, come, now—don 't be weak—don 't be silly. You should not attach yourself in this way to a servant. It 's weakness—worse than weakness." Thus spoke Snipeton to his wife, who had sunk back in her chair, and covering her face with her hands, was sobbing piteously.

At this moment Dorothy Vale moved into the room. "Will mistress ride to-day, the man wants to know?"

"Yes, she will. Yes, my dear, you will"—repeated Snipeton, moving to Clarissa, and very tenderly placing his arms around her; and shuddering, she endured him. "You hear; let the horses be ready in half-an-hour. Go." And Dorothy went; but not a thought the faster for the thundering monosyllable discharged at her. "You 'll see me on my way to town? Some way; not far; no, a mile or so. 'Tis such a morning; there 's so much heaven come down upon the earth. Such weather! You 'll take health with every breath. Eh, Clarissa?" And again the old man threatened an embrace, when the victim rose.

"Be it as you will, sir,"—said Clarissa—"in half-an-hour I shall be ready." And she left the room.

Now was Snipeton delighted with her obedience; and now, he paused in his triumphant strides about the room, to listen. Had she really gone to her chamber? Ashamed of the doubt, he walked the faster—walked and whistled. And then he was so happy, the room was too small for his felicity: he would forth, and expand himself in the garden. He so loved a garden; and then he could walk amid the shrubs and flowers, with his eye upon the window that enshrined the saint, his soul so reverently bowed to. How frankly she yielded to his wish! Every day—he was quite sure of it—he was becoming a happier and happier husband. He looked forward to years and years of growing joy. To be sure, he was growing old: but still looking onward, the nearer the grave, the less we see of it.

"If you please, sir,"—said St. Giles to his new master, as

he entered the garden,—"do you put up both the horses in the city?"

"No: your mistress will come back," said Snipeton.

"Alone, sir?" asked St. Giles; and the husband, as though the words had stung him, started.

"Alone! Why, no: dolt. Alone!" There was something hideous in the question: something that called up a throng of terrors. Clarissa alone, with the world's wicked eyes staring, smiling, winking at her!

"Humph! I had forgotten. As yet, we have but two horses. Fool that I am!" A second confession, and yet early day! And Snipeton, musing, walked up and down the path: and plucking a flower, rolled it betwixt his finger and thumb to assist his meditation. She had consented—so kindly, blithely consented to his wish, that it would be cruel to her—cruel to himself—to disappoint her. "Now, my man, be quick. Run to the Flask, and in my name, get a horse for yourself. In a day or two, we must see and mount you—must see and light upon a decent penn 'orth. Quick. We musn't keep your mistress waiting. And harkye! take my last orders now. When you return, you will ride close—very close to your lady: so close that you may grasp the bridle: the horse may be skittish: and we cannot be too cautious. Obey me; and you know not how you may serve yourself. Go." St. Giles ran upon his errand, and Snipeton, after a turn or two, after another look at the chamber-window where, it so strangely comforted him, to see, through the curtain, his wife pass and repass—walked towards the stable. He began to hum a tune. Suddenly he stopped. He had never thought of it before; but—it was a whim, a foolish whim, he knew that—nevertheless he now remembered that his wife never sang. Not a single note. Perhaps she could not sing. Pshaw! There was an idleness of the heart that always sang—somehow. And thus, for a minute, Snipeton pondered, and then laughed—a little hollowly, but still he laughed—at the childishness of his folly.

Mr. Snipeton was by no means a proud man. He was not one of those incarnate contradictions that, in the way of business, would wipe the shoes of a customer in the counting-house, yet ring up the servant to poke the fire at home. No: he was not proud. He refused not to put his hands to his own snuffers if the candle, or his own convenience, needed them. And so, entering the stable, and seeing the mare yet unsaddled, he thought he would make her ready. And then he patted and caressed the beast as the thing that was to bear the treasure of his life: even already he felt a sort of regard for the creature. He was about to saddle the animal, when he heard, as he thought, his wife in the garden.

He hurried out, and found Clarissa, already habited, awaiting him. And still his heart grew bigger with new pride, when he saw his wife; she looked so newly beautiful. What wondrous excellence she had! Under every new aspect, she showed another loveliness! If he could only be sure that so sweet—so gracious a creature loved him—him—so old and—and—so uncomely a man! And then she wanly smiled; and he felt sure of her heart: yes, it was beating with, a part and parcel of, his own—pulse with pulse—throb for throb—their blood commingled—and their spirits, like flame meeting flame—were one!

"Why, Clarissa, love, you never looked so beautiful—never—indeed, never," said Snipeton, and the old man felt sick with happiness.

"Beautiful, master, isn't missus?" said Becky, and with her opened hands, she smoothed down the folds of the riding dress, as though it was some living thing she loved; and then she gazed at the beauty of her mistress, believing it would be wrong to think her quite an angel, and just as wrong not to think her very near one.

"Your horse is not yet saddled, love," said Snipeton, taking his wife's hand, "not yet, dearest."

"Bless you, master, now missus is dressed, I'll saddle her," cried Becky, and she ran to the stable. Most adroit of handmaids! Equal to tie a bobbin, as to buckle a girth! And ere St. Giles arrived from the Flask with his borrowed steed—it had a sorry, packhorse look, but as the landlord assured the borrower, was "quite good enough for him; who was he?"—the mare was ready.

"Well, 'twill serve for to-day, but next time we must do better than that," said Snipeton, glancing at St. Giles's horse; and then he turned to lift his wife into the saddle. Untouched by his hand, she was in a moment in her seat: another moment, nay, longer, Snipeton paused to look at her; he had never before seen her on horseback. At length the riders went their way, Becky, hanging over the gate, now looking at her mistress—and now, with red, red face and sparkling eyes, bobbing her head, and showing her teeth to St. Giles, doing his first service as groom to Snipeton—and doing it with a sad, uneasy heart: for he felt that he was the intended tool for some mischief—the bondslave to some wrong. And with this thought in his brain, he looked dull and moody, and answered the eloquent farewells of Becky, with a brief, heavy nod.

"Well, I'm sure!" said Becky, as she thought, to her own snubbed soul.

"What 's the matter?" asked Dorothy Vale, who stood rubbing her arms, a pace or two behind her.

"Nothin'. What should be? I never lets anything be the matter. Only when people look good-by's, people might answer.'

"Ha! child," replied Mrs. Vale, with an extraordinary gush of eloquence,—"men upon foot is one thing—men upon horseback is another." How it was that Mrs. Vale condescended to the utterance of this wisdom, we cannot safely say; for no thrifty housewife ever kept her tea and sugar under closer lock than did she the truths, unquestionably within her. Perhaps she thought it would twit the new maid—the interloper—brought to be put over her head. And perhaps she meant it as a kindly warning: for certainly, Dorothy felt herself charitably disposed. Mrs Wilton had left the cottage; and of course that girl—that chit—could never be made housekeeper. However, leaving the matron and the maid, let us follow the riders.

Great was the delight of Snipeton, as he ambled on, his wife at his side; her long curls dancing in the air; the nimble blood in her face; and, as he thought, deeper, keener affection sparkling in her eyes. Never before had he taken such delight in horsemanship: never had felt the quick pulsation—the new power, as though the horse communicated its strength to the rider—the buoyancy, the youthfulness of that time. And still he rode; and still, at his side, his wife smiled, and glowed with fresher beauty, and her ringlets—as they were blown now about her cheeks, and now upon her lips, how he envied them!—still danced and fluttered, and when suddenly—as at some blithe word dropt from him—she laughed with such a honied chuckle, she seemed to him an incarnate spell, at whose every motion, look, and sound, an atmosphere of love and pleasure broke on all around her. Poor old man! At that delicious moment, every wrinkle had vanished from his brow and heart. He felt as though he had caught time by the beard, and had made him render back every spoil of youth. His brain sang with happiness; and his blood burned like lava.

And so rode they on; and Snipeton little heeded—he was so young, so newly-made—the steed that, with asthmatic roar, toiled heavily behind. They crossed the heath,—turned into Highgate, and with more careful pace descended the hill. Every minute Snipeton felt more precious, it was so close to the last, when he must leave, for some long hours, his life of life!—

(Now, is it not sad—we especially put the question to the Eve whose eyes may chance to rest upon these ink-stained thoughts—is it not a matter, tears being upon hand, to weep over, to think of love in love's paralysis, or dotage? Love, with cherub face and pale gold locks, may chase his butterflies—may, monkey as he is, climb the Hesperian timber, pluck the fruit: he is in the gay audacity of youth, and the tender years of the offender sink

felonies to petty larcenies. But love—elderly love—to go limping after painted fancies—to try to reach the golden apples with a crutch stick,—why, set the offender in the pillory, and shower upon him laughter.)

We have written this paragraph whilst Mr. Snipeton—in the king's highway, and, moreover, upon horseback—kissed his young wife, Clarissa. Although the man kissed the woman through a wedding-ring—a lawful circle, and not a Pyramus and Thisbe chink—we have no excuse for him, save this, it had been dragged from him. She—potent highwaywoman—had made him surrender his lips by the force of death-dealing weapons. He was about to separate from her. He took her by the hand—grasped it—she looked in his eyes, and—we say it—the old husband kissed his young wife!

"Caw—caw—caw!" At that very moment—yea, timing the very smack—a carrion crow, flapped its vans above the heads of man and wife, and hovering, thrice cried "caw—caw—caw,"—and then flew to the northward, it might be to tell to gossip crows of human infirmity; it might be, like coward scandal, to feed upon the dead. However, the married pair separated. He would return early—very early that day—to dinner. And she would gently amble homeward; and—as she knew she was the treasure of his soul—she would be very careful not to take cold. She would promise him—aye, that she would.

"Remember—close—very close," said Snipeton, in a low voice to St. Giles; and then again and again he kissed his hands to his wife's back. "She might look once behind," thought Snipeton, gravely; and then he smiled and played with his whip. It was not impossible—nay, it was very likely—she was in tears; and would not show the sweet, delicious weakness to the servant. And still Snipeton paused and watched. How beautifully she rode! Strait as a pillar! And how the feather in her hat sank and rose and fluttered, and how his heart obeyed the motion, as though the plume were waved by some enchantress.

He wished he had taken her with him to St. Mary Axe. What! Ride with her through the city? And then he recoiled from the very thought of the thousand eyes opened and staring at her—as though by very looking they could steal the bloom they gazed at—recoiled as from so many daggers. Still he watched her. Something made him, on the sudden, unquiet. And then, as if at that moment it had only struck upon his ear, he heard the clanging cry of the crow. Another moment, and he loudly laughed. Was it anything strange, he asked himself, that crows should caw? And then again he looked gloomier than before.

He would go home, he thought. For once he would make holiday, doing double work on the morrow. Yes; he would not toil in the gold-mine to-day. And now she had turned the lane. It was too late. Besides, business was ever jealous—revengeful. Love her as you would for years, the beldame brooked no after neglect. She would have her dues—or her revenge. And with this thought, Snipeton stuck his spurs to his horse, and rode as though he was riding to Paradise or a hundred per cent.

"I ask your pardon, ma'am," said St. Giles to Clarissa, about to put her horse to its speed, "but master told me to follow close, and—indeed I ask your pardon—but 'tis'n't possible, mounted as I am. I've had a hard bout to keep up, as 'tis. No offence, ma'am," said St. Giles, very humbly.

"Oh, no; we shall soon be at home—'tis not so far," answered Clarissa; and her altered look, her mournful voice surprised him. It was plain her cheerfulness had been assumed; for on the sudden, she looked wearied, sick at heart. Poor gentlewoman! perhaps it was parting with her husband. No: that generous thought was banished, soon as it rose. Already St. Giles had more than a servant's love for his young mistress; she spoke so sweetly, gently, to all about her. And then—though he had passed but one evening with his fellow-servant, Becky—he had learned from her so much goodness of the lady of the house. Again and again he looked at her; it was plain, she had overtasked her spirits; she looked so faint—so pale.

"Dear lady—beg your pardon—but you're not well," cried St. Giles. "Shall I try and gallop after master?"

"No—no; it is nothing. A little fatigued—no more. I am unused to so much exercise—and—nothing more. Let us hasten home,"—and controlling herself, she put her horse to an amble, St. Giles whipping and spurring hard his wretched beast, to follow, that, nevertheless, lagged many yards behind. A horseman overtook him.

"My good man," said the stranger, "can you tell me the way to Hampstead church?"

"I don't know—I 'm in a hurry," and in vain St. Giles whipped and spurred.

"Humph! Your beast is not of your mind, any how. 'Twould be hard work to steal a horse, like that, wouldn't it?" asked the man.

"Steal it!" and St. Giles looked full in the speaker's face, and saw it one indignant smile. Surely, he had met that man before.

"Come, fellow, you know me?" said the stranger. "Once would

have done me a good turn. I see—now you recollect me. Yes; we are old acquaintance, are we not?"

"No, sir; I know nothing," said St. Giles, but he shook with the lie he uttered. Too well he knew the man who, with looks of triumphant vengeance, scowled and smiled upon him. It was Robert Willis; the murderer loosed from his bonds by the magic tongue of Mr. Montecute Crawley. "I beg, sir, you 'll not stop me. For the love of goodness, don't, sir,"—and St. Giles trembled, as though palsied.

"For the love of goodness! Ha! ha! For the fear of the gallows, you mean. Now, listen to me; felon—returned transport. That lady must not go back to her home. Nay—'tis all settled. She goes not back to old Snipeton—the old blood-sucker!—that 's flat."

"What do you mean?" cried St. Giles, stunned, bewildered.

"My meaning 's plain—plain as a halter. When we last met, you 'd have put the rope around my neck. Raise one cry—stir a foot faster than 'tis my will, and—and as sure as green leaves hang from the boughs above you—so surely—but I see you understand—yes, you are no fool, Master St. Giles, though Hog-lane was your birth-place and school, and Mister Thomas Blast—you see I know your history—your only teacher."

"Do what you will! Hang, gibbet me!—you shan't lay finger on that blessed lady!" And St. Giles, throwing himself from his useless horse, ran, like a deer, after his mistress, Willis, with threats and curses, following. St. Giles, finding his pursuer gain upon him, suddenly stopped, and, as Willis came up, leapt at him, with the purpose of dragging him from the saddle, and mounting his horse. In a moment, Willis, beneath his assailant, was rolling in the dust; but as St. Giles was about to leap upon the horse, he was levelled to the earth by a blow from Tom Blast, who—he was a wonderful man for his age!—sprang with the agility of youth, from a hedge.

"What!" cried his early teacher to the prostrate St. Giles,—"you 'd do it again, would you? Well, there never was sich a fellow for stealing horse-flesh! You was born with it, I s'pose,"—said the ruffian, with affected commiseration, balancing the cudgel that had struck down the vanquished—"you was born with it, and—poor fellar—it 's no use a blaming you."

In a moment, Willis had remounted his horse, and shaking his clenched fist over St. Giles, galloped off.

"How now!" gasped St. Giles, his sense returning, "how now," he cried, opening his eyes, and staring stupidly in the face of Blast, "what 's the matter? What 's all this?"

"Why, the matter is jest this," said Blast. "Your missus is

much too good for your master. That 's the 'pinion of somebody as shall be nameless. And so you may go home, and tell 'em not to wait dinner for her. It 's wickedness to spile meat."

"Tell me—where is she?—where have they carried her?—tell me, or—" and St. Giles, seizing Blast, was speechless with passion.

"I 'll jest tell you this much. Your lady 's in very good company. And I 'll tell you this, partic'larly for yourself: if you go on tearing my Sunday coat in that manner, I know where the constable lives, and won't I call him!" With this dignified rebuke Mr. Blast released himself from the hands of his captor, who—with a look of stupid misery—suffered him to walk away.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

And now is Snipeton widowed. Yes: with a living wife, damned to worst widowhood. It would have worn and tortured the spirit within him sometimes to wander from the desk to the churchyard, and there look down upon Clarissa's grave. To have read, and read with dreamy, vacant eyes, the few tombstone syllables that sum up—solemnly brief—the hopes, and fears, and wrongs, and wretchedness; the pleasant thoughts and aching weariness that breath begins and ends. "Clarissa, wife of Ebenezer Snipeton, died."— Words to dim a husband's eyes; to carry heaviness to the heart; to numb the soul; and for a time to make the lone man, with his foot at the treasure-holding grave, feel the whole world drifted from him, and he left landed on the little spot he looks on. And then breaks small, mournful music from those words: pleasant, hopeful sounds, that will mingle her name with his; that will make him own the dear, the still incorporate dead. The flesh of his flesh, the bone of his bone, is lapsed into the disgrace of death: it is becoming the nourishment of grass; and still his heart yearns to the changing form; still it is a part of him; and his tender thoughts may, with the coffined dead, love to renew the bridal vow the dead absolves him of. And Snipeton, his wife in her winding-sheet, might so have solemnised a second wedlock. For surely there are such nuptials. Yes; second marriages of the grave between the quick and the dead, with God and his angels the sole witnesses.

And Snipeton was denied such consolation. His widowhood permitted no such second troth. Living to the world, his wife was

dead to him; yet, though dead, not severed.—There was the horror: there, the foul condition of disgraced wedlock: the flesh was still of his flesh, cancerous, ulcerous; with a life in it to torture him. By day, that flesh of his flesh would wear him; by night, with time and darkness lying like a weight upon him, would be to him as a fiend that would cling to him; that would touch his lips; that would murmur in his ear. And let him writhe, and struggle, and, with a strong man's strong will, determine to put away that close tormentor, it would not be. The flesh was still of his flesh, alike incorporate in guilt and truth.

But Snipeton is still a happy man. As yet he knows not of his misery: dreams not of the desolation that, in an hour or so, shall blast him at his threshold. He is still at his desk; happy in his day-dream; his imagination running over, as in wayward moments of half-thrift, half-idleness, it was wont to do, upon the paper on his desk before him.—Imagination, complete and circling; and making that dim sanctuary of dirty Plutus a glistening palace! The pen—the ragged stump, that in his hand had worked as surely as Italian steel, striking through a heart or so, but drawing no blood—the pen, as it had been plucked from the winged heel of the thief's god, Mercury, worked strange sorcery; crept and scratched about the paper, conjuring glories there, that made the old man sternly smile; even as an enchanter smiles at the instant handiwork of all-obedient fiends. Reader, look upon the magic that, cunningly exercised by the Snipetons of the world, fills it with beauty; behold the jottings of the black art that, simple as they look, hold, like the knotted ropes of Lapland witches, a power invincible. Here they are; faithfully copied from that piece of paper—the tablet of old Snipeton's dearest thoughts, divinest aspirations:—

"£70,000"—"£85,700"—"£90,000"—"£100,000"—
"£150,000"—"£1,000,000!"

In this way did Snipeton—in pleasant, thrifty idleness—pour out his heart; dallying with hope, and giving to the unuttered wish a certain sum in black and white; running up the figures as a rapturous singer climbs the gamut, touching the highest heaven of music to his own delight, and the wonder of the applauding world.

In this manner would Snipeton take pastime with his spirit. In this manner was the paper on his desk writ and over-writ with promised sums that, it was his hope, his day-dream, would surely some day bless him. And the numerals ever rose with his spirits. When very dumpish—with the world going all wrong with him—he would write himself down a pauper; in bitterness of heart

loving to enlarge upon his beggary, as thus: 000,000,000,000. But to-day, he had ridden with Clarissa; she had looked so lovely and so loving; he was so re-assured of her affection; could promise to himself such honied days and nights that, dreaming over this; smiling at her flushed face; and with half-closed eyes, and curving mouth, gazing in fancy at her dancing plume,—he somehow took the pen between his fingers, and made himself a paradise out of arithmetic.—Thus he laid out his garden of Eden, circling it with rivers of running gold! How the paradise smiled upon paper! How the trees, clustered with ruddy bearing, rose up; how odorous the flowers—and what a breath of immortality came fluttering to his cheek! Snipeton had written—

"£1,000,000;"

and then he sank gently back in his chair, and softly drew his breath as he looked upon what should be his, foreshadowed by his hopes.

Now, at the very moment—yes, by Satan's best chronometer—at the very moment, Clarissa was lifted from her horse, placed in a carriage, and whirled away from home and husband. And he saw not her face of terror—heard not her shriek for help. How could he? Good man! was he not in Paradise? Let us not break in upon him. No; for a while, blind and innocent, we will leave him there.

The reader may remember that Mr. Capstick was threatened with an ignominious dismissal from the British senate, as having, it was alleged, bought an honour that, like chastity, is too precious to be sold. The misanthropic member for Liquorish, in his deep contempt of all human dealings, took little heed of the petition against him; whilst Tangle called it an ugly business, as though in truth he secretly rejoiced in such uncomeliness. Snipeton, too, looked grave; and then, as taking heart from the depth of his pocket, said he would "fight the young profligate to his last guinea;" (and when the weapons are gold, how bloody oft the battle!) Whereupon Capstick relented a little in his savage thoughts; believing that pure patriotism did exist in human nature, and had one dwelling-place at least in the heart of Mr. Snipeton.

"Turn you out of Parliament, sir; they might chuck you out o' the window, sir, for what he 'd care, if it warn't for his spite. I 've told you that all along, and you won't see it," said Bright Jem.

"I am sorry, Jem, that in your declining years—for there 's no disguising it, James—you 're getting old and earthy—cracking like dry clay, Jem," said Capstick,——

"I don't want to hide the cracks," interrupted Jem: "why should I? No: I'm not afraid to look Time in the face, and tell him to do his worst. He never could spile much, that's one comfort."

"I am sorry, nevertheless, that you have not a little charity. If I don't think well of anybody myself, that's no reason you shouldn't; on the contrary, it is slightly an impertinence in you to interfere with what I've been used to consider my own privilege." Thus, with dignity, spoke Capstick.

"All I know is this—and I'm sure of it—if Mrs. Snipeton had as big a wart upon her nose as her husband, you'd never have been Member for Liquorish," said Jem, with new emphasis.

"Really, Mr. Aniseed"—for Capstick became very lofty indeed—"I cannot perceive how Mrs. Snipeton's wart—that is, if she'd had one—could in any way interfere with my seat in Parliament."

"In this manner," said Jem; laying one hand flat upon the other. "In this manner. If she'd had a wart upon her nose, young St. James, when he went to borrow money of her husband, would have behaved himself like a honest young gentleman; wouldn't have written letters, and tried to send presents, and so forth, till old Snipeton—poor old fellow! for though he was a fool to marry such a young beauty, there's no knowing how any on us may be tempted"—

"You and I are safe, I think, James?" said Capstick, with a smile.

"I think so; but don't let's be presumptious. However, that's no reason we shouldn't pity the unfortunate," said Jem. "Well, old Snipeton wouldn't have been forced to send his young wife into the country, where his young lordship went after her—I've heard all about it. And then Snipeton wouldn't ha' been jealous of the young gentleman, and then you'd have been at the Tub, happy with the pigs and the geese, as if they was your own flesh and blood; and you'd still ha' been an independent country gentleman, walking about in your own garden, and talking, as you used to do, to your own trees and flowers, that minded you—I'm bound for it—more than anybody in the house o' Parliament will do."

"Don't you be too sure of that, Mr. Aniseed. When the Minister hears my speech"—

"Well, I only hope my dream of last night won't come true. I dreamt you'd made your speech, and as soon as you'd made it, I thought you was changed into a garden roller, and the Minister, as you call him, did nothing but turn you round and round. However, that's nothing to do with what I was saying,—

saving your presence, I don't like you to be made a tool on."

"A tool, Mr. Aniseed! A tool—define, if you please, for this is serious. What tool?" and Capstick frowned.

"Well, I don't know what sort of tool they send to Parliament; but, if you 'll be so good, just feel here." Saying this, Jem took off his hat, and turning himself, presented the back part of his head to the touch of Capstick.

"Bless my heart! Dear me—a very dreadful wound! My poor fellow—good Jem"—and Capstick put his arm upon Jem's neck, and with a troubled look, cried—"Who was the atrocious miscreant?—eh!—the scoundrel!"

"Oh no: he didn't mean nothing. You see, it was last night, while I was waiting for you till the House was up. Taking a quiet pint and a pipe among the other servants, some on 'em begun to talk about bribery and corruption: and didn't they sit there and pull their masters to pieces; I should think a little more than they pulled one another to bits inside. Well, your name come up, and all about the petition; and somebody said you 'd be turned out; condemned like a stale salmon at Billingsgate. I didn't say nothing to this: till Ralph Gum—the saucy varmint, though he 's my own flesh and blood; that is, as far as marriage can make it"—

"Marriage can do a good deal that way," said Capstick, smiling pensively.

"Till Ralph Gum—he was waiting for the Marquis—cried out, 'What! Capstick, the muffin-maker?'"

"I do not forget the muffins," said Capstick, meekly. "On the contrary; in Parliament I shall be proud to stand upon them."

"But he said more than that: 'Why, he 's a thing we 'll turn out neck and heels; he 's only a tool!'"

"Oh, a tool!" cried Capstick, "I am a tool, am I? Very well; a tool! What said you to this?"

"Nothing—only this. He was sitting next to me, and I said, —'You saucy monkey, hold your tongue, or learn better manners,' —and with this, in the softest way in the world, I broke my pipe over his head: whereupon, the Marquis's coachman and footmen all swore you was a tool, and nothing but a tool—and they wouldn't see their livery insulted, and—I forget how it ended, but there was a changing of pewter-pots, and somehow or other this"—and Jem passed his hand over his bruised head—"this is one on 'em."

For a few minutes Capstick remained silent. At length he said, determinedly—"Jem, I feel that it would be some satisfaction to me to see this Mrs. Snipeton."

"What for?" asked Jem, in his simplicity.

"Why—well—I don't know; but if she is really what people say, there can be no harm in looking on a beautiful woman."

"Well, I don't know—but for certain, they'd never do no harm, if they never was looked upon," said Jem.

"Jem, you ought to know me by this time; ought to know that since Mrs Capstick died I look upon beauty as no more than a painted picture."

"Well, that's all right enough, so long as we don't ask the pictures to walk out o' their frames," answered Jem. "But, sir, in this Parliament matter—and I'd sooner die than tell a lie to you, in the same way as I think it my bound duty to tell you all the truth, though you do sometimes call me James and Mr. Aniseed, instead of Jem, for doing it—in this Parliament matter, master,"—and Jem paused, and looked mournfully at Capstick.

"Out with it," said the Member for Liquorish. "After the lectures, surely I can bear anything. Speak."

"Well, then, and you'll not be offended? But if ever there was a tool in Parliament, master—now, don't be hurt—*you* are a tool, and nothing better than a tool. There! When they were throwing pewter pots about last night, I didn't choose to own as much; now, when we're together, I must say it. Member for Liquorish! La, bless you! as I said afore, you're Member for Spite and Revenge, and all sorts of wickedness."

"I certainly will see Mrs. Snipeton," said Capstick, "and to-morrow, Jem; yes, to-morrow."

In pursuit of this determination, Mr. Capstick—with no forewarning of his intended visit to the master of the house—opened the garden gate, and proceeded up the path to the cottage, followed by Bright Jem; who in his heart was hugely pleased at the magnificent manner in which his master stalked, like a sheriff's officer, into the sanctuary of wedded love, or what is more, of wedded jealousy: calm, authoritative, self-contained, as though he came to take possession of the dove-cote. Even Dorothy Vale was startled by the abrupt intrusion; and looking from the door, and rubbing her arms with quickened energy, begged to know "what they wanted there?" Ere, however, Capstick could descend to make due answer, Becky ran from the door, with many a voluble "dear heart!" and "who'd ha' thought it!" and "Is your honor well?"

"Very well, my maid; very well," said Capstick. "I should like to see Mrs. Snipeton."

"La! now, what ill luck," cried Becky, "she's gone out a hers back with master; but she won't be long, if you'll only be

so good as to walk in, and wait a little while; she 's such a sweet lady, she 'll be glad to see you."

Dorothy said nothing; but hugging and rubbing her arms, looked sidelong at the new maid; looked at her, as one, whose glib tongue had in one minute talked away her place; for assuredly did Dorothy, even in her dim vision, see Becky with her bundle trundled from the house, as soon as Mr. Snipeton should learn the treason of his handmaid.

"I 'll walk about the garden till they come back," said Capstick; "I 'm fond of flowers; very fond."

"They won't come back together; for Master 's gone to Lummun; but the young man, the new servant"——

"Ha! the young man that took you from St. Mary-Axe," said Jem; and Becky nodded and coloured.

"Both of you new together, it seems," observed Capstick, meaning nothing; though Becky, colouring still deeper, thought she saw a world of significance in the careless words of the Member of Parliament. But then it was a Member of Parliament who spoke; and there must be something in every syllable he uttered. That he should couple herself and St. Giles was very odd; quite a proof that he knew more than most people.

Capstick had lounged up the garden, Dorothy marvelling at his ease; whilst Jem held short discourse with Becky. "And he 's a good honest young man, eh? Well, he looks like it," said Jem.

"I never goes by looks, I don't," said Becky. "Talking about looks, how is that dark young man you knocked in the gutter? Your nevey, sir, isn't he? How is he?"

"Why, I may say, my dear, he 's in the gutter still, and there let him be. But as for your fellow-servant, I think"—said Jem—"I think he 's an honest young fellow."

"I should break my heart, do you know—I mean—I should be so sorry—in course I should—if he wasn't. He 's so good-tempered; so quiet-spoken; so willing to give a helping-hand to anybody. And yet for all this; somehow or t'other, he doesn't seem himself. One minute he 'll be merry as a mountebank; and afore you can speak, his face will go all into a shadow. Can't be happy, I think?"

"Perhaps not," said Jem; "I wasn't myself when I was about his time of life. Perhaps, Becky, perhaps he 's in love."

"Don't know, I 'm sure; how should I?" said Becky, turning short upon her heel; whilst Jem followed his master, at length resolved to narrate to him the history of St. Giles. Again and again Jem had attempted it; and then stopt, huddling up the story as best he could. For the new dignity of Capstick had

made him—as Jem sometimes thought—cold and cautious; and after all, it might not be proper to bring together a returned transport and a Member of Parliament. The garden was winding and large; but Jem could not well miss his master, inasmuch as the orator was heard very loudly declaiming; and Jem, following the sound, speedily came up with Capstick, who, with his hat upon the ground, his right arm outstretched, and his left tucked under his left coat-tail, was vehemently calling upon "the attention and the common-sense, if he was not too bold in asking such a favour," of a triple row of tall hollyhocks, representing for the time the Members of the House of Commons, and unconsciously playing their parts with great fidelity, by nodding—nodding at every sentence that fell from the honourable orator. "There is nothing like exercising the lungs in the pure air," said Capstick, slightly confused; and picking up his hat, and falling into his usual manner.

"I think I should know what it was," said Jem, "calling coaches in a November fog; just like hallooing through wet blankets."

"Demosthenes—you never heard of him—but that 's no matter: "Demosthenes," said Capstick, "used to speak to the sea."

"Well; he 'd the best on it in one way," said Jem; "the fishes couldn't contradict him. But surely, now—upon your word, sir—you don't really mean to make a speech in Parliament?" Capstick's eye glistened.—"You *do?* Lord help you! when, sir,—when?"

"Why, Jem, I can't answer for myself. Perhaps, to-night—perhaps, to-morrow. If I 'm provoked, Jem."

"Provoked, sir! Who 's to provoke you, if you 're determined to sit with your mouth shut?" said Jem.

"The truth is, Jem, I had resolved to sit a whole session, and not say a syllable. But I shall be aggravated to speak, I know I shall. The fact is, I did think I should be abashed—knocked clean down—by the tremendous wisdom before, behind me, on all sides of me. Now—it isn't so, Jem," and Capstick looked big. "I did think my great difficulty would be to speak; whereas, hearing what I do hear, the difficulty for me is to hold my tongue. In this way—I feel it—I shall be made an orator of against my will. By the way, Jem, talking of oratory, just sit down in that arbour, and fancy yourself the House of Commons."

"Couldn't do it, sir." Capstick imperatively waved his arm. "Well, then,—there, sir," said Jem; and he seated himself bolt upright in a honeysuckle bower, and took off his hat, and smoothed down his few speckled hairs; and put on a face of gravity.

"That won't do at all," cried Capstick. "I just want to try a little speech, and that 's not a bit like the House of Commons. No; roll yourself about; and now whistle a little bit; and now put on your hat: and now throw your legs upon the seat; and, above all, seem to be doing anything but listening to me. If you seem to attend to what I say, you 'll put me out at once. Not at all parliamentary, Jem."

"Shall I shuffle my legs, and drum my fingers upon the table? Will that do?" cried Jem.

"Pretty well: that will be something," answered Capstick.

"Or I tell you what, sir;—if, while you was making your oration, I was to play upon this jew's-harp"—and Jem produced that harmonious iron from his waistcoat pocket—"would that be parliamentary and noisy enough?"

"We 'll try the jew's harp," replied Capstick, "for I have heard much worse noises since I sat for Liquorish. Wait a minute"—for Jem essayed to preludise—"and let me explain. The motion I am going to make, Jem, is to shorten the time in the pillory." Jem shook his head hopelessly. "According to the law, as at present operating, the time of the pillory is one hour. Now, I don't want to be called a revolutionist, Jem; I don't want to array all the respectability and all the property of the land against me——"

"Don't, sir, don't; if you love your precious peace of mind, don't think of it," cried Jem.

"Therefore, I do not at present intend to move the total abolition of the pillory," said Capstick.

"You 'd be stoned in the streets, if you did. People will bear a good deal, sir; but they won't have their rights interfered with in that manner. Do take care of yourself, pray do. I shouldn't like to see you in the Tower," said Jem, with genuine tenderness. "Let the pillory alone, sir; touch that, and folks will swear you 're going to lay your hands upon the golden crown next; for it 's wonderful what they do mix up with the crown sometimes, to be sure."

"Fear not, Jem. I shall respect the wholesome prejudices of my countrymen; and therefore shall only move that the time in the pillory be henceforth reduced from an hour to half an hour. That 's gentle, I think?"

Jem stroked his chin—shook his head. "I know what they 'll call it, sir; interfering with the liberty of the subject. No, they 'll say—our forefathers, and their fathers afore 'em, all stood an hour, and why shouldn't we?"

"I am prepared for a little opposition, Jem; but, just fancy yourself the House, while I speak my speech. Make as much

noise, and be as inattentive as possible, and then I shall go on." Jem obediently buzzed—buzzed with the jew's-harp, shambled with his feet, rocked himself backwards and forwards; and, to the extent of his genius, endeavoured to multiply himself into a very full House.

Capstick took off his hat—held forth his right arm as before, with the supplementary addition of a piece of paper in his hand, and again with his other arm supported his left coat-tail. "Sir"—said Capstick, looking as full as he could at Jem, who rocked and shifted every minute—"Sir, it was an observation of a Roman emperor——"

"Which one?" asked Jem.

"That 's immaterial," answered Capstick. "A question that will certainly not be asked in debate. I take a Roman emperor as something strong to begin with—of a Roman emperor that *Qui facit per alium*"——

"Hallo!" cried Jem, holding the jew's-harp wide away from his mouth; "what 's that—Latin?"

"Latin," answered Capstick.

"Well—my stars!"—said Jem—"I never knowed that you knowed Latin."

"Nor did I, Jem," replied Capstick smilingly. "But I don't know how it is; when a man once get into Parliament, Latin seems to come upon him as a matter of course. Now go on with your jew's-harp, and make as much noise as you like, but don't speak to me. 'Tisn't parliamentary. Now then," and Capstick resumed the senator—"'it was an observation of a Roman emperor ——"

"If you please, sir, I 've laid some bread and cheese and ale in the parlour," said Becky, breaking in upon the debate. "It 's a hot day, sir, and I thought you might be tired."

"Well,—I don't know. What, Jem," asked Capstick, smacking his lips,—"what do you propose?"

"Why," answered Jem rising, "I propose that the House do now adjourn."

Capstick returned the paper to his pocket, and taking up his hat, said—"I second the motion." After a very short pause, he added—"And it is adjourned accordingly." Whereupon he and Jem turned to follow Becky, who had run on before them, down another path. In less than a minute a shriek rang through the garden.

"Why, that 's the girl! she 's hurt, surely," cried Jem.

"Pooh, nonsense," said Capstick, quickening his pace, "it 's nothing; taken a frog for a crocodile—or something of the sort. Women love to squall; it shows their weakness. It can't be anything——"

"Oh, sir—sir—sir—" cried Becky, flying up the garden, and rushing to Capstick,—"they 've stole her—carried her off—my dear, dear missus!"

"Carried off! Mrs. Snipeton—the lady"—exclaimed Capstick.

"Stole her away by force—oh, my poor master—oh, my dear missus—the young man will tell you all—master's heart will break—my sweet lady!" And Becky with flowing tears, wrung her hands.

"Why? Eh—what is all this?" said Capstick to St. Giles, who looked pale and stupified. "Fellow, what 's this?"

"I'll tell you all about it, sir,"—said St. Giles. "The lady's horse was swifter than mine—I could no how keep up with her. And when we turned out of Highgate we"—here St. Giles turned deathly pale, and his feet sliding from under him, he fell to the earth.

"He 's dead—he 's dead," cried Becky, falling upon her knees at his side, and lifting up his head, when her hands were instantly covered with blood, drawn by the cudgel of Blast. On this she renewed her screams; renewed her exclamations of despair. "He was dead—murdered!"

At this moment old Snipeton ran, reeling up the path. Dorothy Vale, more by her chalk-like face, than by her tongue, had revealed the mischief to her master. "Missus was gone—carried off—the man was up the garden." His life—nothing but his life—should satisfy the cheated husband. Snipeton rushed to the group; and when he saw St. Giles prostrate, insensible; the old man, grinding his teeth, howled his curses; and in very impotence, worked his hands like a demon balked of his revenge.

CHAPTER XXXV.

We will not linger with Snipeton. For why cast away sympathy—that essence of our moral being—upon an old, money-loving man, gulled of his youthful wife? Wherefore pity him, made, by the lucky boldness of hired knavery—retained and paid by scoundrel cowardice—the living joke of the best society, shaking its sides at the best of clubs? Had the miserable man been left upon the road, with out-turned pockets, and a medicable bruise or gash or two, why there would have been no jest whatever in the dull mishap; the robbery and the wound might have passed among the serious things that lengthen even careless faces. But how different the casualty! A man—an old man—and the quintessence of the drollery lay in his wrinkles—had

been robbed of his other self; had had his very being rent in twain, and to think of his loss was rarest comedy—to picture him writhing in the agony of that forced separation was to crow with laughter. Such was the compassion bestowed by men upon the old money-merchant, as rumour, like a wild-goose, cackled as she flew. Therefore, for a time, we will leave Snipeton at his solitary hearth. No; not solitary. For now the figure, the features of his wife—the run-away; yes, there was the horror; there the burning truth that poisoned the wound—were multiplied about him. It would have been some relief to the tortured—a passing breath cooling the damned—to think that beautiful mischief the victim of violence: but no; she had clubbed her share of cunning; she had played a free part in the wickedness; she had fled from him; and he could hear her laughter at the trick. And then those very numerals—things that in pleasant idleness of heart he had jotted down, as fancied guards and retinue of wealth, to glorify and do homage to that idol of his home—they rose in his brain like sparks of fire, and he howled and whined like idiotcy. And at the same time, as we have said, there was great laughter—very great enjoyment at the clubs.

The scene is shifted—night has passed away. For a time poor Snipeton sat with his eyes upon the hand of the clock as though he watched a dagger aimed to strike him. And the hand moved from hour to hour: and then, in deep night, as one on whom despair had fastened, not to be loosed but at the grave, he sat in silent, sullen misery.

The scene is shifted. We are miles away in pleasant Surrey. In an old house—old as the gnarled elms and oaks that majestically stand, the sylvan guards, around it—is Snipeton's stolen wife. That house is the abiding-place of the luckless horseman thrown from his steed at Hampstead, and duly tended by Crossbone, and duly robbed by Blast. Accident and sickness save a world of ceremony, and the patient and the surgeon were in briefest season, fast friends. You may grow a friendship quick as a salad, that like the salad, shall serve the required purpose; and so it was with the intimacy sprung up 'twixt Shoveller and Crossbone. Shoveller was pleased to call himself—a man of the world. We say pleased; for he proclaimed his title, as though it was one of honour to be mightily proud of. He would say, "I am a man of the world;" indicating that he was wholly and entirely of the world: that he dealt with facts; hard facts; hard and real as the world he felt with his soles; and quite a different matter from the misty, cloudy world, that swam above his head.

And Crossbone was also a man of the world. Hence, he felt himself drawn towards Shoveller, even as two dead logs in a pond are attracted together. In the very dawn and roseate blush of their friendship, Mr. Shoveller had informed Crossbone that he was the owner of a snug, retired nook, buried away amid trees in a wild patch of country; a solitary house, without, as he observed the curse of neighbours. He had seen so much of town-life in his days—at times, too, mixed so very actively amongst the company of London—that now and then, he felt it absolutely necessary to the preservation of his health, nay, even of his life—to be turned out to a bit of grass. And as Mr. Shoveller spoke, the face of Crossbone was lighted from an inner light; for his fancy glowed with a pleasant picture—that of Mrs. Snipeton spirited from her chastised lord, justly punished for the offence of marriage—and dwelling, like a wood-dove, for a timely season at least, in that pleasant hermitage.

Briefly, Mr. Shoveller offered his house and household devils—for his lares had cloven feet and barbed tails—to the service of Mr. Crossbone; who, without offence to the spirit of hospitality, in the prettiest manner hinted at hard payment at an early day. Whereupon, Mr. Shoveller professed his readiness to engage a dear and valued friend or two (he had a large bosom for friends, that man; and could, upon occasion, have lodged all Newgate) to form an escort for the lady, from the perils of the journey. And Mr. Shoveller kept his word; it was his pride to do so: and the greater the mischief to be done, the more binding did he ever hold the engagement.

It was the morning after the service accomplished by Mr. Shoveller, and he and Crossbone walked in the little orchard: walked as friends should walk, newly knit together by rascal wrong; they both took such pains to be at ease. "A sweet place, here: a very sweet place," said Crossbone.

"Why, yes; the grass is as green here as anywhere; the birds sing as well, and the flowers are as fresh; but what of that?" answered the philosophic Shoveller, "I never care to brag."

"No man of the world does," said Crossbone. "Bless me! what a crop of apples you 'll have!"

"And pears, and plums, and cherries," said Shoveller, slowly; and then he added, "Mrs. Snipeton has a devilish pretty mouth. And to think her lips should keep so red; when, I doubt not, winter has touched them so often. Ha! ha! Poor little kitten: how she pouted! Well, if I love to see anything, it is now and then to look upon a pretty woman in a tearing rage."

We know not what recollection darkened Crossbone's mind—he had known the sorrows of widowhood, and perhaps felt them anew

—but he gazed with mixed sadness and surprise at Mr. Shoveller "Taste is everything; it's the salt of life; without it we should be as like one another as snails; and for what I know, have just as much enjoyment. Nevertheless there is a taste that grows into a disease; and, pardon me, my dear friend, if I think a taste for a lady in a rage, is a taste of that very sort. Now cannibalism is only a taste, nothing more. Nevertheless, though—as men of the world—we may flay one another, we respect the decencies of life, and stop there." Thus spoke Crossbone.

"It is such a pretty sight"—said Shoveller, returning to the picture—"to see what they would do, with what they only do. When I lifted her from her horse, her little white hand grasped me, as it would tear me to bits. 'Don't madam,' said I; 'I'm ticklish, and shall laugh:' and when I put her into the carriage, and placed myself beside her, she looked at me, as though she thought her eyes burning-glasses that must make tinder of me; and worked her precious lips, as though they were crossbows shooting twenty deaths at me. And then—but I asked her pardon like a gentleman—and then I laughed—I couldn't help it. Oh, I do love a woman in a rage; it gives the pretty thing such animation; turns so much that seems china-work into real flesh and blood."

"And nails," Crossbone was about to say: but with an afterthought he waived the subject as painful, and observed—"You don't think it possible Mrs. Snipeton can see me here? Because, my dear friend, I must not be known in this business; that is, unless professionally."

"Do you see that hand?" said Shoveller, exhibiting his right palm close under Crossbone's eye.

"Perfectly well; I once studied chiromancy—that is, as a boy—and I can see that your hand was made ——"

"For roasted chestnuts."

Crossbone stared.

"Nay, nay, you are, you know it, a man of the world. The chestnut is in the house there; and this is the hand—the paw of poor puss—that you, knowing pug that you are—that you have used to ——"

"Now, my dear friend," exclaimed Crossbone, apprehending the intended application, "if I thought you thought so, I assure you it would make me very unhappy. Very unhappy, indeed. You see, mine is a very difficult, a very delicate part. For to-morrow, I must see Mr. Snipeton."

"And, perhaps," said Shoveller with his best gravity, "perhaps prescribe for him."

"Should his condition require it"—assented Crossbone—"prescribe for him."

"Well, as you know the seat of his complaint,"—and Shoveller jerked his head towards the house—"no one better—you'll have but little trouble with him. Poor old man! Don't bleed him much. Ha! ha!"

"Don't sport with surgery. It has been my weakness—I may say, very unprofitable weakness—to have too much respect for my profession. I love it so dearly, I can't suffer a joke upon it. Hark!" cried Crossbone, and he turned towards the road and listened—"hark! Confess me a wizard, now. That's a horse."

"Well, in the worst of times, you couldn't have been burned for that prophecy," said Shoveller.

"Yes; but a horse that carries a lover. There's a beating heart at full gallop and—did I not say so?" and Crossbone receding behind a shrub pointed to young St. James as he slackened his pace at the house. "Now, my dear friend, I must leave you; I must wait upon his lordship. You know your promise—I mean—our bargain? The house ——"

"Is his lordship's," cried Shoveller; and that man of the world looked very wise. "The house, and all that's in it. I know true hospitality; especially, when paid for. I have the honour, Doctor Crossbone ——"

"Not yet; no diploma just yet," said Crossbone, meekly: and with a faint smile.

"Oh, it's coming fast, now. When rascality—not, my dear friend, that I mean rascality—I would speak as a man of the world—when rascality succeeds, dignity as a matter of course must follow. Therefore, again Doctor Crossbone, I have the honour to wish you a good morning; and more, the unbounded gratitude of your excellent and noble employer." With this wish, gravely delivered, and a dignified movement of the hat, Mr. Shoveller resigned his place of host to the apothecary, and struck down the garden, away into the fields; perhaps to meditate on life, and all its doings.

Ere the reader could learn this much, Crossbone was at the side of his lordship, who, dismounting, resigned his horse to Ralph Gum: and that very intelligent youth looked at Crossbone, and then looked at the house, as though his moral sense took a good, hearty sniff at some mysterious mischief, and enjoyed it hugely.

"Your lordship," said Crossbone, "shall not the horses be put up? There's stabling—"

"No: at least, not for the present. He has his orders," said St. James, who was then bowed into the house, and Gum, buried in thought, walked the horses down the road. It was very certain that his lordship was committed to some piece of

pleasant knavery; and the young man felt flattered that, ever so humbly, he had been permitted to mix in it. Wages must be raised.

Crossbone led St. James into a large low room, plainly, but solidly appointed. The oaken furniture was black and shining with age and huswifery; and a few pictures on the walls —portraits of long-since forgotten churchyard earth — looked coldly, gloomily, on the intruders. The young lord seemed ill at ease; like one who had given up his conscience to the keeping of another, yet feared to call him to account for the trust. Now he glanced moodily at Crossbone, and now with his whip, beat at his boot. But Crossbone—happy in his triumph!—marked it not. He had succeeded in so great an attempt; he had such a radiant captive to adorn his victory, that he marked not the ingratitude of the man so undeservedly made happy. Crossbone expanded himself, body and soul, that he might receive all the blessings to be poured down upon him. And at length his lordship, looking full at his benefactor, observed, "Well, sir?"

Crossbone winced a little; only for a moment. And then vigorously smiling, and bowing, and throwing apart his arms, as if with the action he would open his very heart, said, "My lord —my dear lord—if, on this happy occasion, you will allow me to call you so—I congratulate you. At length, you are in the very house ——"

"And whose house may it be?" questioned St. James, glancing to and fro.

"Oh, for that matter, my lord, your lordship's own; that I have settled—your own, so long as you shall deign to use it. You are master"—and Crossbone laughed like a tickled demon—"master of the house, and all the house contains."

"And that, Mr. Crossbone, doesn't seem to promise much," said the ungrateful nobleman.

Crossbone smiled, as conscious knowledge may be allowed to smile, and with his left-hand fingers coaxed his chin. He then mincingly approached St. James, and like one about to speak a spell ineffable, said "Mrs. Snipeton"—and then the apothecary paused, and stared. As well he might: for that very ardent young nobleman, the Lord St. James, did not spring to his feet, re-echoing the silver name. No: his lordship—gravely as he would have sat in Parliament, had not the democratic misanthropic muffin-maker defeated him—his lordship for the second time, made answer "Well, sir?"

"Mrs. Snipeton, my lord, is at this moment in this house," cried Crossbone, with the emphasis of an injured man.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed St. James, and his blood rose to his face.

"Permit me to observe, my lord"—said Crossbone, naturally affected, hurt by the placidity of his patron—"that to devotion, and fidelity, with a little intelligence — for true wisdom never brags—I defy my enemies to say it of me—all things are possible. Mrs. Snipeton is here; here, my lord, without"—and the apothecary chuckled at the thought, it was so droll—"without Mr. Snipeton."

It was very strange—very odd—what could his lordship be made of? He showed no sign of an attempt to snatch the apothecary to his arms; in the gratitude of that warm embrace, forgetful, for one fleeting moment, of the world and its ceremonies that ought to make the gap between them. No: as though his lordship was sitting for a statue of patriotism, or stoicism, or any other virtue to be wrought in stone for a very miserable posterity —for as the world, upon the best authority, with every generation gets worse and worse, in due time, the demi-gods of one age will of course become the Troglodytes or Cretins of another—as though we say, his lordship had posed himself for a sculptor, to go down a seated giant to future dwarfs, so did he listen to the tremendous intelligence uttered by Crossbone. Is gratitude extinct?—thought Crossbone; passed from the world with its dragons and griffins? Crossbone was not a man to weep: nevertheless, he believed he felt a moistening of the eyes, as he looked upon the extraordinary indifference of his friend and patron. Would he never speak?

At length his lordship somewhat relieved his faithful vassal. "Mrs. Snipeton here? Alone? Without her husband, you say? And how is this?"

"You know not, my lord—no, and you never shall know—the pains I have taken, the danger I have risked, to insure your happiness in this matter. You never shall know it."

"And was the lady carried off by force?" Crossbone paused. "Answer me, man: was violence used? Speak," cried St. James.

"Why, that is—gentle violence. The—the sort of violence that is not displeasing to any of the sex. Just a violence that is nothing more than complimentary to the dear things: enough to keep up appearances; not a bit beyond."

"She struggled—screamed—and—"

"Yes; there were all the graces, all the etceteras, and little flourishes used on such occasions; but, as I say, not a whit more, my lord, than enough to keep up appearances. The lady felt that she was being torn—yes, torn is the word with the world—torn from an old, and ugly husband; and submitted to the operation

with proper fortitude. But for appearances, as I say, she 'd have squeaked no more than a rose-bud pulled from a bush—a nectarine twitched from a tree."

"Come, sir,"—and young St. James smiled, though somewhat sourly,—"you shall tell me all about it."

Never did veteran tell the story of his laurels with greater relish than Crossbone felt as he narrated the history of his conquest. "You see, my lord, I knew your heart was set upon this matter; and therefore, though there are people in the world who may affect to lift their eyebrows at the transaction, therefore, urged by a sudden friendship for your lordship—if you will permit me to use the delightful word—I was determined to gratify you. But it was necessary for both of us, that I should go warily to work. Hence, in my professional capacity, I threw in the prescription of horse-flesh, that I might get the lady from under her husband's roof. This settled, my next care was to secure a sweet, sequestered spot, far from the meddling intrusion of a scandalous world; and fortune, seconding my wish, flung the owner of this house into my hands,—a pliant, easy man, my lord, who knows the worth of money. By the way, my lord, your servant—I mean the fellow you gave me as a follower—is, by no means, a man for our work. When the woman was in our power—that is, in the power of my friends, for it would have spoilt all had I mixed myself in the matter—the rascal would have fought for her, when he was levelled by as pretty a blow, I am told, as ever fell to the lot of a fool. We must get rid of him, my lord, that 's plain. Well, my lord, my friend Mr. Shoveller—"

"And who is Mr. Shoveller?" asked St. James, drily.

"Oh, the owner of this quiet little castle. A snug, silent retreat, is it not, my lord?"

St. James cast no complimentary look at the walls, and then motioned Crossbone to continue.

"My story," said the apothecary, with commendable spirit, considering the coldness of his hearer, "my story is now soon told. The lady had left her husband on his road to London—to St. Mary Axe, my lord; you know the den—strewed with the bones of young spendthrifts, though we can't see 'em, my lord—well, she had left him, and her rascal servant, mounted on a wretched horse—Shoveller, deep fellow, had taken care of that—could not keep up with her, and to bring the story to an end, there was a little squealing—just for appearance—when Mrs. Snipeton was safely lifted into a carriage. The horses tore along—and here she is."

"You are a bold practitioner, Mr. Crossbone," said St. James, with a disturbed look: a look that showed perplexed thoughts

—increasing hesitation. "And there was not much violence?" added the young lord, slowly.

"Just as much as I have said, my lord; nay, hardly that. The truth is, I believe—indeed, I am sure—the pretty creature knew—for women have shrewd guesses in such matters—knew where she was coming—knew whom she was to meet—and so, yes, so, my lord, behaved herself accordingly."

"Well, it may be. I wish I could think it," muttered St. James.

"You may soon assure yourself, my lord. The lady is, I say, in this house. After much toil and trouble and—but, as I have said, I won't brag, it isn't my way—she is here—under this roof—up stairs"—for the coldness of St. James made Crossbone emphatically precise—"and, in a word, my lord, here is the key."

As the apothecary suddenly presented that domestic implement to St. James he unconsciously recoiled from it as from some mortal mischief. "A prisoner—locked up!" cried the young man.

"Why, my lord, after so much ado to cage the bird, think you I'd leave the door open?" Thus spoke Crossbone, and with an impatience a little disrespectful of his hearer's rank. But, it must be confessed, even by the most ceremonious, that when a man for the sake of friendship and a little alloy of gold, risks the reward of felony, it is somewhat trying to the spirit to be met with the blank face and wandering eye of the gentleman assisted. Crossbone felt smitten to the soul as he still felt the key between his fingers—still saw the young nobleman regard the piece of cold iron as iron, nothing more; and not the instrument that, with a turn, would open a gate of Paradise. And then pride—it was very natural—arose in the breast of the apothecary; and with a cold, thick voice, he said—"What am I to understand, my lord? Will you take the key, or will you"—the alternative was tremendous—"leave it alone?"

Instantly, St. James snatched the key, and Crossbone felt lighter by many a hundred weight. "Upstairs?" cried St. James.

"Upstairs, my dear lord"—answered Crossbone—"along the passage, and the first door to the right." St. James quitted the room; and the apothecary sank in a chair, one heap of thankfulness. Deluded man! He had little cause for thanksgiving; but then, he knew not as St. James mounted the stairs what virtuous resolution accompanied that good young gentleman; knew not that his noble friend—the friend for whom he had worked so hardly, had risked so much—turned, loathingly from him, as from so much moral carrion. Again and again had the visionary carriage-wheels rumbled in the ears of Crossbone: again

had he seen himself the court physician; again had he laid his finger on that most wondrous mechanism, a royal pulse,—and now, whilst St. James trod the stairs, the day-dream came full and glowing on the rapt apothecary; and he sat in clouds of happiness.

Now and then it is well for the peace, the self-complacency of folks—determined to consider themselves very worthy individuals—that the world is a world of masks; that thought, the face of the mind, may laugh or frown unseen behind that vizor of flesh bestowed upon all men. Indeed, it is only by means of such vizors that the masquerade of human life is carried on; for when the mask drops, earth ends. Had it been otherwise, could Crossbone have looked upon the mind of St. James, he would have given up all thoughts of carriage-wheels, and possibly—like many a disappointed varlet—felt an instant yearning for virtue, if assured with bodily safety. With Newgate suddenly frowning upon his soul, he might have welcomed his old abode; and thought more tenderly of the human weeds of earth, all careless of its flowers. But Crossbone was denied this knowledge; and therefore sat happy in his ignorance; still listening to the lies of harlot fortune. And her silver tongue so beat upon his brain—with such sweet harmony possessed him—that it was not until she had twice spoken that Crossbone heard the syllables of a real woman; and then fortune was silent, and melted away in a golden mist, and the apothecary saw Mother Daws—for so she was affectionately named by Shoveller—standing at the door.

It was difficult to think her of the sisterhood of Eve. However, the mind was fain to submit to the tyranny of petticoats, and—though not without a struggle—believe their bearer, woman. There was that about her would make a reasonable man, with affectionate thoughts for the past, think tenderly of the times when that old, human husk with blinking eyes and mumbling tongue, would have been to the world no more than a Christmas-log; a thing to cast upon a fire, to make men merry with. In those good times, not a cow would have suffered that woman to approach her, but would have inexorably refused the eventide milk; not a porker would have caught her eye, but would have obediently sickened and died of the witch. Heavy, sedate hay-stacks, at the step of that old woman, would have taken a thousand wings and flown upon a sudden hurricane. And, worse than all, impudently, most irreverently taking to herself the form of a hare, she would have led poor Squire October's hounds some twenty miles and more, and then have vanished in a flash of light. She would have fed little children upon a diet of crooked pins, and blasted the hopes of butter-churns. And now, Mother Daws was

an ugly bunch of an old woman, and nothing more! And thus it is, by the presumption and hard usage of man, Time—like a venerable sire, fobbed by unfilial sons—is wronged,—in his old age, cheated, and debarred of dearest rights, and wholesomest amusements. We have long since taken witches from him; and there are men who, after all his losses, would deprive him of the gallows! What, in time, will be left to Time?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"You didn't call?" said Mrs. Daws; and Crossbone looked a savage assent. "The gentleman 's gone up-stairs," added the unmoved woman; for it was not in the face or words of tyrannic man to shake her. "Well, I only say what I said when you brought her here—I know what I know."

"To the devil with you, and all your knowledge at your back!" cried Crossbone, and he jumped from his seat, and strode towards the door. There he paused; and from his lips dropt that manna of life, good counsel. "I tell you what, Mother Sulphurtongue; let me advise you neither to see nor hear.—At your age, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, not to be blind and deaf too." And Crossbone quitted the house, and strolling down the lane, turned into a little wood; possibly to think of the reward awaiting him; possibly to add to his knowledge of herbs and simples. As to Mrs. Daws, she looked full of slumbering destruction; and with a passing smile of conscious mischief, she betook herself to household affairs, calmly, patiently awaiting her time. She would wash up the breakfast-things, and well contemplate her measures.

We left St. James upon the stairs. In a moment he was at Clarissa's chamber-door. Determined upon making the amplest atonement within his power, he had resolved to restore the lady to her injured husband. Yes; he would himself lead her back to Mr. Snipeton's home; and, confessing the part that his weakness had consented to in the plot which, whilst unacted, seemed of such light account,—beg the good man's pardon. Pledging his noble word never again to offend, he would cure himself of the unlawful passion by foreign travel; or he would fall in love with another woman. At all events, he was determined to make a sacrifice; and would crown himself, the conqueror of his own passions. What a vile, base, inconceivable scoundrel was that dirt-eating apothecary; how atrocious was the part he had

played; how degrading the association of a moment with him; and then, how satisfactory, how truly ennobling to confess a fault, the confession coupled with a determination of future amendment! And these varied thoughts possessed young St. James, as pausing, with the key in his hand, he was about to open the door: he listened; all was silent. Well, there was nothing strange in that. Again he listened: no, she was not sobbing—there was no sound of grief. Perhaps, she was fast asleep. There was an air of peacefulness—of repose—in all things, that even confused him. After all, he had possibly wronged the apothecary: the man had been a little over-zealous; nothing more. Still, all was silent. He listened: yes; he thought—or then tried to think—that he heard a low breathing, as of deep slumber. Grief never slept so soundly—a torn heart sank not so suddenly to rest. It was plain, he had been too precipitate; that is, in his determination to restore the woman to her husband. She might, in her heart, despise him for his pusillanimity. In her heart, she might rejoice at the violence that supplied her own want of courage by bearing her away. And then, what a jest would it be for the world—for his world—should he think to play the moralist! He might be nicknamed Scipio for life. Still there was no sound, save that of lowest breathing. What a simpleton he had nearly shown himself! There could be no doubt that the woman loved him; and, the step taken, was profoundly happy for her deliverance. Placing the key in his pocket, St. James descended the stairs to have some further talk with the apothecary; the ill-used man who had suffered in the hard judgment of his noble friend.

Now, whilst St. James, following Crossbone, takes counsel of that wise, worldly man, we will return to the Honourable Member for Liquorish; all the time tremendously indignant at the violence offered to Snipeton's household gods, and resolved, at the cost of any exertion or peril, to revenge it.

Mr. Capstick left Snipeton late in the evening, having exacted from him a promise that he would attend a council to be held at the senator's lodgings, in Long Acre, early next morning, should no news be obtained of the fugitive ere then. In the meantime, Capstick, advised by Bright Jem, had summoned Jerry Whistle, that meekest of human bloodhounds, to assist them. Late at night, Mr. Whistle had been acquainted with all the circumstances. Whereupon, he had played with his watch-chain, and observed—"This sort of caper, you know, Mr. Capstick, is very often a put-up thing; very often, indeed. And I must say it, the evidence is all against the 'oman. Yes, I must say it, against the 'oman."

"But you have heard that the young man says she was carried off?" said Capstick. "He'll swear to it."

"No doubt on it, so far as he could see; very honest young man, that; I hope, too, he'll take care of himself. Still, it's against the 'oman, and it's my 'pinion, any jury would so find it. Why, bless my heart, Mr. Capstick, and have they sent you to Parliament, and saving your presence, do you know no more of life than that? Why, look you here. The young 'oman, they say, is like a full-blown rose, and the old man's as wrinkled as a prune; there's a young nobleman, too, in the case, and—well, well; depend upon it, if we find her out—and I'm safe to do that, or my name's not Whistle—she'll not thank us for our pains, I'm bound for it." And Whistle went his way.

Now, Capstick, though he would not confess it to himself, was nevertheless shaken in his faith by the officer: he spoke with such a weight of official experience. "Jem, I don't believe a word of it; Mr. Whistle has seen so much of the black of life, poor man, he can't believe in any white at all—eh, Jem?"

"He has seen a good deal, sir; good deal. Wonder he doesn't look quite worn out, and quite wicked," said Jem. "For I don't know how it is, though wickedness and misery ain't catching, to look at 'em, nevertheless they do seem to leave a shadow in a man's face; a something that's a part on 'em. I know now, when I've been digging among the flowers—ha! I wonder who's looking at them precious carnations, now! I've always felt as if I'd got some of their brightness about me. A man that looks upon tulips, and roses, and flowers of all sorts all his life,—why, it's quite plain, he catches their good looks as I may say; for that's the beauty of flowers, they always look happy and good-tempered; bits of innocence that almost seem to make us innocent while we stare at 'em."

"This is not a time to talk of such trumpery, Jem," said Capstick: and Jem winced at the contemptuous word, which, to say the truth, came from the throat, and not the heart of the speaker. "My opinion is, that Mrs. Snipeton has been carried off by ruffian violence. I hope I don't think too well of anybody—I trust not—I never did in all my life, and I'm not going to begin now; but I must believe her to be a guiltless, ill-used gentlewoman. And then the man was knocked down in her defence—and, by the way, I was going to speak to you about that young man."

"Yes, sir, to be sure; he's now searching all corners, and swears he'll find his mistress, if he dies for it. A nice, honest young fellow that, sir," said Jem. "Has it all in his face, hasn't he?"

"Why, to say the truth, I think he has; that is, he looks too honest. People who've so much of it in their faces, people who somehow make a show window of their countenance—well, some-

how, I distrust 'em. Where does he come from? Who were his parents? Has he got a character, and did the parson of the parish sign it? If he hasn't, I don't believe in him. The fact is, I 've been too easy all my life; and will never take a man's character again if it isn't written in a good bold hand, and properly authenticated. Who is he? Ever since he called at the Tub—well, those bees have a nice time of it, they have; they hav'n't to go down to the House—ever since then, he 's been flitting about me, as if he was some mysterious puzzle of a vagabond that—why, Jem, what are you looking so hard at? What 's the matter, man?"

"Well, sir, I must say it; though you are a member of Parliament—heaven help you in all your misfortunes, say I—you hav'n't grown the wiser on that account. Don't you remember a poor little piece of a dirt of a boy called St. Giles?"

"Certainly; one of the things raised to be hanged; one of the little rascalities of life reared up that respectable folks may seem all the more respectable; one of the shades of the fine picture of life, bringing out the bright colours all the stronger. It 's a pity they didn't hang him. Mercy 's a haggling virtue, after all, Jem; and nine times out of ten, does just as much harm as mischief itself. Well, what of St. Giles?" cried Capstick, quite relieved by his burst of cynicism—quite refreshed with his own vinegar.

"Why, you know, he was transported for life. A long time that, sir, for fourteen to look for'ard to," said Jem.

"Pooh, pooh; he went to a fine place, Jem: Botany Bay; lovely climate; six crops of peas in a year; pine-apples for a penny; and cockatoos so plenty, they put 'em in pies instead of pigeons. St. Giles—he! he!—a great man now, I 've no doubt. Shouldn't wonder if he hunts kangaroos with fox-hounds, and drives a coach-and-four."

"Well, with any chance of that, I should say he 'd never come back again," said Jem, very gravely.

"Back again! Why, Mr. Aniseed, are you ignorant of the laws of your country?" cried Capstick, his eye twinkling.

"I am," cried Jem; "and when I know what a lot of wickedness is in some of 'em, I can't say that I 'm not glad I don't know any more: saving your presence, again, as a member of Parliament, and a maker of the same."

"Well, then, you do not know, perhaps, that if St. Giles was to put his foot in merry England, they'd hang him for the impertinence? Are you aware of that interesting fact, Mr. Aniseed?" cried Capstick.

"Why, without any conceit, I should hope I did know that

much. But you see, sir, love of country is strong; though I don't know why it should be," said Jem.

"Nor I. But a man's love for his country is very often like a woman's love for her husband; the worse the treatment, the deeper the affection. To be sure, we're all of one family—all men; and that, I suppose, is why we quarrel and go to war so often. And a droll family we are, too, Jem. I declare, Jem, when I sometimes sit and look at that globe—for since I was made a member, of course I could do no other than buy a couple, one for the earth and one for the stars; in case anything should come up about boundaries of—"

"Of what? The stars?" cried Jem.

"No; not of the stars. And—though I wouldn't answer for anything an Act of Parliament couldn't meddle with—when I sit and look at the globe, I do think that the family of man, as we call ourselves—even while we're grinding swords to cut some of the family's throats—the family is, after all, a droll lot. I often do pity my millions of brothers. When I'm in bed, I think there's my brother in Greenland going to turn out in the snow, to catch a seal for dinner. And there's my brother in Kaffirland making himself a very handsome sash of sheep's entrails. And there's my brother in India laying down his body for wheels to roll him into paste. And another Oriental brother standing upon one leg for twenty years, that he may pass to Brama as a cock passes to sleep. And there are thousands of other brothers notching, cutting, tattooing fraternal flesh in all shapes and all patterns. And there is a brother on the banks of the Bosphorus going home from the purchase of a fiftieth wife, thinking no more of the bargain than if he had bought a tame rabbit. And there are crowds of other gluttonous brothers dancing round a brother tied to a stake, ere he shall be roasted—dancing round him, and, with sparkling eyes, anticipating the tit-bits of the living animal. And there is another brother dying, with a cow's tail in his hand, as though that tufty queue tied heaven to earth, and he could climb to bliss upon it. And there are millions of brothers playing such tricks, and, what is worse, permitting such tricks to be played upon them, that sometimes, Jem, I do feel ashamed of the family. I do. And then I have wished myself—since I have a habit of walking upon two legs, and any other manner of going would be inconvenient—I have wished myself, Jem, an old, grave, patriarchal baboon, deeply buried in some forest; some thick, impervious, abiding-place—some green garrison, made unapproachable by spikes and thorns, and matted canes and reeds, and all the armoury that nature grows, to guard her solitudes. Yes, Jem; sometimes when I have been out of humour with my family—that

most quarrelsome biped lot—I have wished myself, as I say, an old baboon."

"Well, I never did that. But I do recollect this," said Jem. "Once, when I was a little boy, and had been licked for doing nothing, but saying I was hungry, and standing to it,—once I did wish myself a monkey, at a parlour window in a square, eating cherries like any Christian, though at the time they couldn't ha' been less than a shilling a-pound. I did wish that, and thought it very wicked arterwards; but I never did, in my proper senses, wish myself a baboon, straddling about with a young tree for a walking-stick, like I've seen 'em in the pictur-books. I never did wish that."

"That only shows you want ambition, Jem. But to return to our love of country, Jem, and young St. Giles."

"Well, all I was going to say is this. Suppose he was here—what would you do?" asked Jem.

"Do! As a law-maker, respect the laws. Give up the miscreant, of course," said Capstick.

"You couldn't do it, sir; no, you couldn't do it," cried Jem with despairing emphasis; and Capstick, though he tried to look astonished at the contradiction, cared not, it was plain, to pursue the argument.

Early the next morning, Mr. Whistle made his appearance at Capstick's lodgings; and Mr. Whistle was so calm, so self-possessed, apparently so content with himself and all the world about him, that it was clear he had passed the last night in a manner most profitable to the ends of justice. With the customary flower in his mouth, he still hummed a tune, still played with his watch-chain. He seemed perfectly happy; his heart was warmed with a great secret.

"Well, Mr. Whistle, about this most unfortunate lady," said Capstick. "Any news?"

"News! To be sure. She 's all right," cried Whistle.

"Right!" echoed Capstick. "Carried off—torn away from her husband—and all right? Mr. Whistle!"

"This is rather a serious business; not at all a common matter, Mr. Capstick. A very nice and delicate affair, I can tell you: and for this reason"—said Whistle, with his finger at his nose,—"there 's nobility in it."

"Nobility! That makes it more atrocious," cried Capstick. "That nobility should violate the laws—"

"Well, I don't know," observed Mr. Whistle; "as they 're born to make 'em, perhaps they think they 've the best right to do what they like with 'em. Howsomever, it will be a difficult job; a very difficult job," and Whistle shook his head.

"I can't see it. You say—at least I understand as much—that you have got good scent of the runaway?"

"Scent! What did I come into the world for? I was made on purpose for the work. In course I have. Before I went into my blankets last night, I could almost have sworn where to put my hand upon 'em; and afore I got up this morning, I was moral certain of it: and it's turned out as I thought; in course, as I thought."

"Well, then, Mr. Whistle," cried Capstick, "there's no time to be lost?"

"We've the day before us," answered the officer; "and we musn't spoil it by too much hurry, you see."

But here Mr. Whistle was interrupted by the announced arrival of Mr. Snipeton's servant; and St. Giles, pale and haggard, presented himself. He winced, and the colour flew to his cheek as he saw the officer, who—still chewing the flower-stalk—looked calmly, nay kindly, upon the returned transport.

"Well, young man," said Whistle, "and what news do you bring?"

"None at all, sir: none. I've not been off my legs all night; and I can hear nothing—nothing," said St. Giles.

"Humph! I believe you know one Crossbone, an apothecary? He was Mrs. Snipeton's doctor down in Kent, eh? Perhaps I'm wrong, but I've heard so," said Whistle, and he looked with a shrewd, magpie look at the interrogated. "And I believe this Mr. Crossbone is the friend of a young nobleman, somewhere about St. James's-square, eh? And it was the apothecary, I think, who recommended you to good Mr. Snipeton?"

To all these questions St. Giles silently assented.

"Pray, my man," cried Whistle sharply, "do you know a gentleman, by name Thomas Blast?"

"No," cried St. Giles, quickly; and then he coloured at the falsehood. "Why do you ask?" he stammered.

"Nothing: I thought you might have known him. Howsomever, it seems you don't; and as his acquaintance isn't to be bragged of, why"—added Whistle, with a sidelong look,—"why you don't lose nothing."

Capstick, who for the last few minutes had been shifting his feet, and vigorously biting his thumb, here cried out, "Well, but Mr. Whistle, it strikes me that we should immediately communicate with Mr. Snipeton. That wronged, that worthy man—"

"Left his home a little after daylight, sir," cried St. Giles. "I've been to Hampstead, sir. He's gone, nobody knows where."

"Poor man!" cried Capstick, "let's hope the best; but I'm

afraid he's desperate. What 's to be done, Mr. Whistle? What do you propose? Pray speak, sir; for I'm in such a flame, sir—pray speak!"

"The first thing to be done," said Whistle, "is to hire a chaise—"

"Of course, instantly. A chaise and four, Jem; directly," cried Capstick. "Well, and what next?"

"Well, that I'll tell you, when the chaise comes," answered Whistle; and, with this answer, we for a short time leave the party, returning to the neighbourhood of the house of Shoveller;—the house so hospitably surrendered, for so much cash, to Mr. Crumbrose.

In a small room in an old farm-house, about two miles distant from the prison of Clarissa, sat a party of three; two were engaged on ham and eggs, and country ale; eating, drinking, as though life to them had no other duties. The third sat silent and sad; with a heavy, leaden look, that seemed to see nothing. Now, these three were Tangle, Tom Blast, and Snipeton. The old man had quitted his home to take the earliest counsel of his professional conscience; and on his road to town had met Tom Blast; who, as he declared, had risen early that he might seek the disconsolate husband, and pour into his ear consolatory tidings. Mr. Blast had spent part of the previous night in contemplating the iniquity of the case; and determining within himself at once the wisest and most profitable conduct. It was plain, that Mr. Shoveller looked upon his merits with a very contemptuous eye, and, therefore, though he had duly assisted at the abduction of the lady, knocking down his young friend with a stern sense of duty and a bludgeon—therefore he felt that he should still best perform his duty to his conscience and his interest by doing service to Mr. Snipeton. He would, no doubt, pay a good sum for the knowledge of his wife's whereabout; and therefore Blast rose early, like an honest, thrifty man, to make offer of the pennyworth. And this intention Mr. Blast merely indicated to Snipeton on their first meeting, assuring him that as the day grew older, the information would ripen; and with this hope, Snipeton took Blast with him to the house of Tangle. It was here that Mr. Blast spoke out. It would be his ruin for life—there was no doubt of that—if it was known that he had peached: he would be hunted all over the world, and never know a moment's quiet; yet he had, he hoped, a conscience; he had been an unfortunate man, always trying to do the right thing, but the world never letting him do it: nevertheless, he would not despair of honesty and a good character, yes, with a quiet, happy, comfortable old age to end with. And so, as it was a wicked thing to part man and

wife, and he could not think where people who did such wickedness could ever expect to go to, he would at once tell Mr. Snipeton where Mrs Snipeton was for—yes, for ten guineas. Anybody who did not care to be honest would have asked twenty, but he would say ten at a word; leaving anything beyond that to the generosity of worthy Mr. Snipeton.

"And you are not aware, Mr. Blast," said Tangle, "that at this moment we may take you up for an accessary; that we may cage you, instead of paying you, eh?"

"Well, and what if you did?" asked Blast. "You might lock me up, I know; but you couldn't unlock my mouth. But it's like the way of the world; you won't let a poor man be honest, if he would. A fine handsome young gentleman 's run off with this old gentleman's wife, and——"

"There—no matter—hold your peace," cried Snipeton. "You shall have the money"—whereupon Blast immediately held out his hand—"when the—the woman 's found," said Snipeton.

"I can't give credit, sir; I can't, indeed; and for this reason,—you see, my character won't let me. Because, supposing I give you up your wife, and you don't give me the guineas, well, I 've such a bad name, and you 're sich a respectable gentleman, all the world would be on your side, and nobody on mine." We know not whether this reasoning weighed with Snipeton; but he counted out the ten guineas upon the table, which Blast duly took up, counting them again.

"For sich a beautiful cretur as your wife, it 's cheap, sir; I must say it, dog cheap."

"No remarks, fellow," cried Tangle; "but let us to business directly." Whereupon they left Red Lion Square; and, a few hours past, were in the county of Surrey, at the farm-house already named. Their meal finished, Mr. Tangle rose, and with Snipeton held whispering counsel. Then Tangle left the house, recommending Blast to remain with his patron, who was duly advised to watch him, in the fear of treachery. And so two hours passed, when Tangle returned; and again whispering with Snipeton, the husband, with rage newly lighted in his countenance, quitted the house; Tangle, in his turn, taking charge of Blast.

To return to St. James. His good genius—shall we say good, for he thought it so?—led him to Crossbone, who, it will be recollected, had walked forth, it may be to contemplate the profitable prospects of his future life; it may be, as we said, to peep and peer in hedge and ditch for health-restoring herb. Crossbone—there was magic in that knowing man—speedily reassured the timid nobleman. Clarissa doated upon him—was only too happy that violence had been used—and, in a

word, what would she think of him if, with the dove in his hand, he again flung it into the sky, when it must needs go home! Had he, so handsome—so spirited a gentleman—no fear of the laughter, the ridicule of the world! What would the world say of him!

It was very strange, that the thoughts of the apothecary should so harmoniously accord with his own. St. James was determined. He would see Clarissa; would passionately seize the advantage offered him. He must be an idiot—a block—a stone to think otherwise. And with this new resolution, St. James returned to the house; Crossbone promising to follow him.

"And do you mean to murder the sweet lady!" asked Mrs. Daws of St. James, who started at the hard question.

"Murder! my good woman! What do you mean!" And his lordship blushed.

"You 've the key of the door, and she ha'n't had no dinner," was the old woman's cutting answer.

"Here is—stop! I will myself see and apologise to the lady." Saying this, St. James mounted the stairs, and placed the key in the lock. One moment, reader, ere he turns it.

An opposite door, unseen by St. James, is ajar; an eye, gleaming like a snake's, looks from it—looks murderous hate. It is old Snipeton's. Tangle had effectually performed his mission, winning over Mrs. Daws; no difficult achievement, for the old creature—warped, withered, despised for age and ugliness—had a woman's heart that revolted at the duty forced upon her by her master. Snipeton had resolved to watch from his hiding place; to listen to the words of St. James and his wife, that he might distinguish between treachery and truth; and so he had promised himself that he would suffer the interview, and calmly—very calmly—listen. Such was his thought. Weak man! St. James was about to turn the key, when Snipeton, with the strength of madness, sprang upon him, and whirled him from the door. In a moment, St. James's sword was in his hand; in the next, through the body of Snipeton; who, reeling, drew a pistol and fired. St. James was scathless; but the bullet did its mischief; for Tom Blast, rushing up stairs, received the piece of lead—it must be owned, a damaging alloy, to the ten golden guineas.

And now the cottage is filled with visitors; for Capstick, St. Giles, Bright Jem, and Jerry Whistle—with a couple of official friends—arrive at the door. Snipeton, speechless, with looks of agony and hatred, pointed towards St. James. Whistle at once divined the truth. "My lord, I ax your pardon," said the polite official, "but you 're my prisoner." St. James slightly bowed, and turned away, followed by the two officers.

"And there 's another," cried Tom Blast, "there s St. Giles—horse-stealer—returned convict—you know him, Jerry; you must know him—I 'm done for—but it s something to hang that dog."

"'Tis too true, mate," said Whistle to St. Giles, "you must go along with me."

"With all my heart," answered St. Giles. "I see there 's nothing left me but to die; I may be at peace then."

Capstick tried to speak, when his eyes filled with tears, and he seized St. Giles by the hand, and grasped it. "I knew you—and hoped better—but take heart yet, man, take heart," said Capstick, whilst Bright Jem shook his head and groaned.

"Come in, come in, directly," cried Mrs. Daws, with her hands fast upon Crossbone, then at the threshold. "Here 's the good gentleman killed—murdered."

Crossbone looked at Snipeton—felt his pulse—and said, "Who 'd have thought it! So he is."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It was but the walk of a few minutes, and the two culprits, St. James and St. Giles,—who could have prophesied this companionship of guilt!—duly escorted by the officers, arrived at the little public-house, where Capstick and his companions on the journey had left the carriage. The muffin-maker himself remained behind at the cottage, insisting that Crossbone should not quit the wounded Snipeton; as, in the avowed ignorance of Capstick, "it was quite impossible that he should be dead." Crossbone could only smile contemptuously at the hopeful man, and look about him, as one looking for an easy escape. "The body is the body of a dead man, sir," said Crossbone. "I think I ought to know: I have not practised so many years not to have an intimate acquaintance with death."

"Dead! Bless my heart! Really dead, and alive but this minute!" cried Capstick, vacantly.

"Of course. What do you expect hearts are made of? The left ventricle—I 'm sure of it—cut quite through," said Crossbone. "So! a pretty piece of news to tell the Marquis—and that blessed woman,—it will kill her—the Marchioness."

"And the wife of the murdered man?" cried Capstick—"but dear soul! she mustn't see this sight:" and he withdrew the key from the unturned lock. "Let us remove the body."

"Not by any means," said Tangle. "Quite illegal. Here it must lie for the inquest."

"Lie here! Why, man, the poor soul must step across it to descend the stairs. "Here, Jem; help me to break the law just a little, will you. In that room, Jem; in that room." And Capstick and Jem lifted the dead man into the chamber whence he had rushed upon his death; Mr. Tangle, during the brief operation, loudly declaring that not for the best fifty pounds would he have a hand in it. "And now, Mr. Crossbone," said Capstick, "we'll go down stairs to that poor wretch."

"I really have not any time to waste upon such people now," said the apothecary. "And when I remember that, at this very moment, his lordship may have the greatest need of me,——"

"You don't stir from this house"—and Capstick, with calmest determination, grasped the apothecary's collar—"until you see the man. You don't know what may depend upon his life."

"*His* life!" exclaimed Crossbone. "Why, I 'm much mistaken if it 's worth a sixpenny rope."

"Perhaps not, as you may value the article; but as the life of an innocent man may depend upon it, you must save one for the other's. I tell you, sir, you must; and there 's an end of it." With this decision, Capstick led the apothecary in custody into the parlour, where Tom Blast, with several of the country folks about him, lay writhing in misery—pain giving to his features the most terrible expression. All the hidden wickedness of the man's heart seemed brought into his face, intensified by suffering. Two poor women hovered over him; whilst other spectators stood apart, contemplating with a curiosity that seemed at once to fascinate and horrify, the terrible show before them.

Crossbone, still in charge of Capstick, was brought to the wounded man; whose eye, flaming with new hate, lighted upon the doctor; and whose voice, rattling in his throat, growled inarticulately like a beast's. Crossbone recoiled from the patient, but was brought back by the grasp of Capstick. "Come, sir; what do you think of him?" asked the senator. "There 's life yet, eh?"

"A nothing, sir; I can see it—oh, yes; a mere nothing. The ball is somewhere here," and the apothecary manipulated, with a strong hand, the sufferer. "Can't get at it just now; but a little medicine—something cooling—and in a day or two we'll extract the lead."

"You 're sure of that, Mr. Doctor? Quite sure?" asked Blast, with a ferocious grin.

"Quite certain," answered Crossbone. "I 'll pledge even my professional reputation upon it."

"Well, then, that 's nothing but right," gasped the wounded man; still terribly eyeing his professing preserver. "For as the bullet came all along of you—why you can't do better than——"

"A little light-headed just now," cried Crossbone, as Blast failed in his sentence. "But, my dear sir, since you take an interest in the person," added the apothecary to Capstick, "I can promise you, that in a few days you shall have the bullet now in his body in your own hands, sir; and his life safe—that is, understand me, safe from lead. All he wants is quiet—merely quiet."

Capstick, for a moment, looked thoughtful. He then observed —"Well, then, we must nurse him." And saying this, the senator exchanged a look with Bright Jem, who, with his best significant manner, nodded assent. Leave we, then, for a short time the dead man, lying stark for the coroner, and the wounded ruffian tended by present care for the hope of future benefit.

Mr. Whistle, on arriving at the public-house with his prisoners, with many apologies requested his lordship to make himself as comfortable as possible under all the circumstances. It was an ugly business; very ugly. Had the old gentleman been merely pinked a little, it would not have signified; but death, downright death, made the affair extremely disagreeable. Nevertheless, his lordship had friends who would see that he had justice done him —the best justice—justice that became his station as a nobleman and a gentleman. And reiterating this consolation, Jerry Whistle again apologised that he must call upon his lordship to consider himself a prisoner; and, for a time, until it was quite necessary to appear before the magistrate, to accommodate himself to the best room of the public-house. As to the ruffian, St. Giles—well, it was very odd, Mr. Whistle observed, that things should so fall out—but surely his lordship would be good enough to remember the little vagrant wretch that stole his lordship's feathered hat when quite a baby; or, if his lordship's memory could not go so far back, at least his lordship must recollect the pony stolen by the youth, St. Giles—he was then, the rascal, fourteen, and must have known better,—and for which he was to have been hanged; only, foolishly enough, he had been sent to Botany Bay; whence, not knowing when he was really well off, he had run away, that he might put his head into a halter at Newgate. He must say it: it was odd, that a gentleman like his lordship, St. James, and such an old offender as St. Giles, should be, so to speak, in trouble together.

"Poor wretch!" said the nobleman. "And where is St. Giles?"

"Why, my lord, he is properly secured in a bit of an out-house. There 's a nice clean wisp of straw for him and his own thoughts. And, moreover, for though it 's weak, I somehow like

to treat a prisoner like a man—moreover, I have ordered him a pint of beer and some bread and cheese. The county pays for it—and if it didn't, why, though I don't brag, 'twould be all the same to Jerry Whistle."

St. James was about to reply to this, when, after a slight, brief knock, the door opened, and Mr. Tangle, with a face of most tremendous woe, and his whole figure full of affliction, crawled into the room. He looked mournfully at St. James, bowed, and deeply sighed.

"Do you come to reproach me, Mr. Tangle," said St. James "with the death of your old friend?"

"Not I, my dear lord," cried Tangle, quickly, "not for worlds. I would reproach no man in his trouble, much less a gentleman—I beg your pardon, my lord—I should say, much less a nobleman. Besides, allow me to disabuse your lordship's mind. Mr. Snipeton was no friend of mine, certainly not. No two could be less alike—I hope. We were only professionally bound together, nothing more. Ties of red tape, my lord; ties of red tape—that's all."

"To what, then," asked St. James, "may I owe the favour of this visit?"

"Oh, my dear lord!" exclaimed Tangle, at the same time slowly taking his handkerchief from his pocket, and well shaking it ere he applied it to his eyes. "Oh, my lord!" he repeated, with his face covered.

"Excuse me, Mr. Tangle," said Whistle, "but I cannot have his lordship distressed after this manner. I'm a man of business, whatever the grief may be. Now, if you've anything to say that will serve the pris——, what am I about?—his lordship, I should say, why, put aside your pocket-handkerchief, and give it mouth."

Mr. Tangle seemed to struggle with himself to obey this injunction. At length, however, he displayed his naked face, and vigorously winking his eye-lids as though to well dry them, he said—"It is not, my lord, for me to forget that I was once honoured with the patronage of your noble house. At a time like the present, when an accidental death—"

"Yes, I know," said St. James, and he shuddered from head to foot—"I know: the man *is* dead."

"He is, my lord," said the consolatory Tangle. "What then? We all must die."

"What a blighted wretch am I!" exclaimed the young man; "blood, blood upon my hands!"

"Not at all, my lord," cried the attorney; "for depend upon it, a verdict must wipe 'em clean. And that, saving your lordship's presence, that I have ventured to come about." St. James idly

stared at him. "There will, of course, be a trial: that is, a form, an honourable form to clear your lordship. And, my lord, it would be an honour to me in my declining age—at a time, too, my lord, when honour is doubly precious to a professional man—to be allowed to attend your lordship through this unpleasant business."

"That can't be, very well, can it," asked Whistle, "for won't they call upon you as a witness?"

"Impossible. I saw nothing of the transaction, I'll take my oath"—and Tangle became even enthusiastic in his asseverations—"I'll take my oath, I saw nothing of it. Will you, therefore, my lord, honour me by your approving commands?" And Tangle bowed to the floor.

"As you will, Mr. Tangle; do what you please," said St. James, indifferently.

"Thank you, my lord. I am delighted, my lord, at the opportunity—that is, I am grateful, my lord; particularly grateful; and now, your lordship"—and Tangle suddenly fell into a solemn, organ-like strain, befitting his words—"and now, to business."

"Well, business. What is it—what of it? Do as you please," cried St. James.

"Oh, my lord, this confidence is, I must say it, affecting. Well, then, my lord, you must have counsel."

"Go on, sir."

"Permit me, then, my lord, to recommend—the only man—Mr. Montecute Crawley."

"Montecute Crawley," faintly echoed St. James; and at the sound, he was in the criminal court of the county of Kent, and saw that weeping advocate of hapless innocence.

"Were my own brother in danger—no, I mean, were I myself,—I know no man like Mr. Crawley. Bless you, he has all the heartstrings of the jury in his fingers, like the fellow with Punch, and pulls 'em just which way he likes. He's safe for office—nothing can keep him out of it. As I heard a young barrister say only a week since, 'Crawley,' says he, 'will take the turn of the tide, and float into office on his own tears.' What a speech he will make about your lordship! Not a dry eye in court, and for what I know, folks weeping outside. Well, then, my dear lord, say Mr. Montecute Crawley. There isn't a moment to lose. In a matter of murder—that is, what the fiction of the law calls murder—he's in first request. At this moment, for all I know, we may be too late. And should they have him on the other side—pardon me, my lord—though I know your case is admirable, nothing stronger—nevertheless, pardon me, my lord, I must tremble. I say it with respect—I must tremble."

"Well, Mr. Montecute Crawley, if you will," said St. James, carelessly.

Ere, the words were well out, Mr. Tangle had caught his assenting client by the hand, and with a fervour more than professional, exclaimed—"Thank you, my lord—bless you, my lord—you have made me a happy man, my lord. I 'll ride myself for post-horses to Kingston, and before I sleep, depend upon it, Mr. Crawley's clerk has the retainer in his hand. Keep your spirits up, my dear lord, and remember—if I may be so bold to say it—that you live under a constitution in which a nobleman is not to be outraged by the hand of plebeian violence without—without—"

"Enough, sir—I know what you would say," cried St. James with disgust.

"It 's very kind of your lordship to say so," and, with his humblest bow, Tangle left the room.

"We shall not stay long here, Mr. Whistle?" asked St. James. "Of course, there is another ceremony?"

"To be sure, my lord: of course, my lord. We have to go before the magistrate: a matter of form. But every respect will be paid to your lordship. A terrible accident, my lord, but nothing more. Nevertheless, it can't be denied that, just now, juries are getting a sort of spite against folks of nobility, and therefore, my lord, I am glad—yes, I will say it, I am glad—that, to prevent any accident, you 've got Mr. Montecute Crawley. Bless you! He 's such a man for washing blackymoors white—got quite a name for it."

"Will you grant me one favour, Mr. Whistle?" asked St. James, suddenly rousing himself from deep thought.

"I wish you could ask twenty, my lord: any favour, except—of course, your lordship knows what I mean—any favour but that one. Never lost a prisoner yet, my lord; and though I 'd do anything for your lordship's noble family,—still I couldn't do that:" and Tangle looked at the door, and shook his head.

"You misunderstand me, Mr. Whistle; I have no such purpose. Whatever may be the result of this most miserable deed, I must and will await it. The favour I would ask is this. Can you let me have some conversation with—with my fellow-prisoner?"

Whistle stared. "Fellow-prisoner!" he echoed. "Well, there isn't a bit of pride in your lordship! If, of course, you wish it, why, of course, it 's done. But your lordship should recollect, he 's a returned transport, a rebellious convict, that 's again flown in the face of his mother country by coming back to her. As

sure as you 're alive, my lord, he 'll be hanged, and—however, it 's for your lordship to choose your own company ; of course."

"Then I am to understand, Mr. Whistle, that you consent?" asked St. James, a little impatiently.

"To be sure ; whatever your lordship wishes—in reason. Here, Wix ;"—and Whistle, opening the door, called to one of his assistants—"bring your prisoner afore his lordship, and bear a hand with him. Not a bit of pride, I do declare," repeated Whistle to himself, as he surveyed St. James with wonder and admiration.

St. James, in silence, paced the room, and Whistle continued to contemplate him as a marvel of condescension ; and then Whistle's thoughts took another current. "To be sure, when the best of people are brought in danger of the gallows, it does a little take the starch of pride out of 'em." This all unconsciously floated through Whistle's brain, as still he looked upon the young nobleman, and with all his might endeavoured to consider him a paragon of humility.

In brief time St. Giles, in custody of the officer, stood at the door. "Mr. Whistle," said St. James, with the most polished courtesy, "may I request that, for a few minutes, this young man and myself be left together." Whistle was melted, awed by the politeness, yet, nevertheless, looked doubtingly about him. "You can still keep watch through the window. There is but one—one door, too."

"Of course, your lordship—to be sure ; not that I thought of that—by no means ;" and Whistle, assuring himself that he could keep as certain watch outside the room as within, bowed, and hastily retired.

"So, young man," said St. James, with a forced calmness, "so, we have met, it seems, in early—very early life."

"Yes, my lord ; very early," answered St. Giles. "I take it, I remember the matter better than your lordship."

"How so?"

"Why, my lord, wretches such as I am, and such as I have always been, have—saving your presence—quicker memories than gentlefolks like you. We take a sharper account of life, for we feel it sharper—earlier. I recollect when I was little more than a babe, I may say, robbing your lordship. Well, it was my fate."

"Not so, St. Giles—not so."

"How was I to know otherwise? Who taught me otherwise? How did I know that I was not made to steal and be whipped for it—and still to steal and—and—be hanged for it? Your lordship, when a child, was—I know it—kind to the boy-thief. You said a good word for him ; they told me all about it, and my heart

felt strangely enough—softened, I thought. And still I went on —and still you was my friend."

"And will still be so," said St. James; "if, indeed, such a miserable creature as I am may promise anything. Now, tell me; Mrs. Snipeton—did she seem a willing agent? Was her resistance, when carried off, a real passion; or was it, think you, but a colourable show of opposition?"

"I cannot say, my lord; that is, I cannot speak from what I saw; I was unhorsed, struck to the ground, stunned and bleeding. The worse luck it was so—otherwise, I think, the lady had been now at home, and the old man alive, and your lordship—"

"Unstained by murder. Oh, that my life could bring back yesterday!" exclaimed St. James; and, for the first time, his grief burst forth in all the bitterness of remorse. With his face in his hands, he wept convulsively.

"I am afraid, my lord," said St. Giles, "I am afraid that man Crossbone has wickedly deceived you. I 'm sure on it; nothing short of force would have taken the sweet young cretur from her home."

"You are sure of it? Was she, then, so fond—so tenderly attached to—to Mr. Snipeton?"

"Oh, not so, my lord—not so, so far as I could see: but, somehow, when the old man looked at her as if his own heart was in her bosom, I could see—even for the time I was with 'em—I could see she pitied him too much to run away from him. Bless you! she was too good and too—"

"Enough—we will talk no more of it. I have been gulled, duped—the vain, yet guilty victim of a scoundrel; and the end is —I am a blood-shedder."

"I can't say your lordship 's been without blame; bad as I am, I can't say that. Nevertheless, you didn't mean to kill the old man—I 'm sure you didn't. 'Twas a hot minute, and it 's a bad job; for all that, your lordship will, I hope, see many happy days to come. Though my time 's short, I 'll pray for that, my lord, with all my soul."

"I tell you, St. Giles, you shall still find friends in my family. Your life shall still be spared."

"And what for, my lord? To be shipped-off again; to be chained and worked worse than a beast; to have every bit of manhood crushed; to have no use for thought but to think curses? No, my lord! Fate 's against me. I was sent into the world to be made, as they call it, an example of; and the sooner it 's all over the better. I was born and suckled a thief. I was whipped, imprisoned, transported, for a thief; and something better grew

up in me, and I resolved to turn upon the world a new face. I was determined, come what would, to live honestly, or die in a ditch for it. Well; the world wouldn't have it. The world seemed to sneer and laugh at me for the conceit of the thing. I've been dodged and dodged by the devil, that first sold me; I've tried to defy him; but, as I say, fate 's against me, and it 's no use. I look out upon the world, and I only see one place—one little piece of ground—where there 's rest for such as I am; and where mercy may be shown to them as truly repent. I trust to get from God what man denies me."

"Nay, poor fellow—"

"Beg your pardon, my lord," said Whistle, putting his head in at the door, "but the post-chaise is come, and—it 's only a form—but we must drive to Kingston, to the magistrate's."

"I am quite ready," said St. James, taking his hat. "And your other prisoner?"

"We 've got a cart for him," answered Whistle.

"Not so," said St. James, "we 'll even ride together."

"Why, your lordship would never so condescend—never so demean yourself—"

"Get in," said St. James, opening the chaise-door, and urging St. Giles, who reluctantly entered the vehicle. "There is no condescension for such villany as mine."

"All right," said Whistle, mounting outside; "all right—to Kingston." And St. James the homicide, and St. Giles the horse-stealer, were, in close companionship of guilt, driven to the magistrate's, on their way to the county gaol.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Wilful murder." Two ugly words to be flung in the teeth of a young nobleman. Nevertheless, a Surrey jury, having sat upon the body of Ebenezer Snipeton, returned such verdict—went through such matter of form, as Tangle benevolently explained it away, and young St. James, in Kingston gaol, awaited the opening of the sessions. Happily, however, for his cause, Mr. Montecute Crawley was retained, and from the interest he expressed for the young nobleman himself, and for the house of St. James at large, there was no doubt that the learned counsel would be more than ordinarily pathetic. Kingston gaol was for some weeks the resort of very fashionable people, tender in inquiries touching the health and spirits of the noble offender;

and—we sigh for human depravity as we chronicle the wickedness—more than one Kingston innkeeper was known to express a lively hope that "some fine young lord would kill a money-lender every week, it did such a world of good for business."

And the out cast, vagabond horse-stealer and returned convict, was not left friendless to count the passing hours between the dungeon and the gibbet. The Member for Liquorish, at least once a week, condescended to visit Kingston gaol, generally accompanied by Mr. Tangle, who, suddenly expressed the tenderest sort of professional sympathy for the offender. Mr Capstick, the lawyer, and Bright Jem, were one day some fortnight before the Sessions, at the prison with St. Giles in counsel upon his mode of defence, a subject which the muffin-maker seemed to fondle with growing affection—when they were summoned by the turnkey.

"If you please, gen'lemen, and you, St. Giles, you're wanted in the infirmary," said the man.

"With the greatest pleasure—certainly," said Mr. Capstick "What 's the matter?"

"Why, the prisoner, Tom Blast"—he had been committed to safe custody to insure his evidence—"wants to die."

"Well," cried Capstick, "has anybody expressed any objection?"

"Not a bit," said the turnkey, "only he says he can't die comfortable, afore he sees you, sir, and the prisoner, St. Giles, in partic'lar. He says he wants to make himself as clean as he can afore he goes out 'o the world, and the governor has sent for the magistrate and clerk that all things may be done proper."

"Very right—most important," exclaimed Capstick. "Come along, St. Giles: well, death's a rare softener. The inexpressible rascal! Poor miserable wretch!" and Capstick, duly followed, proceeded to the infirmary.

Snipeton's bullet had done its work, although Mr. Crossbone's professional reputation had been duly vindicated, and the lead extracted from the ruffian It had, nevertheless, left its mortal sting behind: Tom's intemperate habits had rendered him, as the doctor familiarly observed to the sufferer, a ticklish subject; inflammation ensued, and Thomas Blast was in a fair way, in his last hour, to defeat the prophecy of past envy, and to die in a bed with naked feet. "If I hadn't a drunk so, doctor says I'd ha' got over it," observed that philosophic scoundrel to the nurse. "It isn't the lead, but the gin. Well, if gin isn't the devil himself—cheat him as you may, he's sure in the end to be down upon us." These moral reflections were delivered by Blast with the air of a man who, nevertheless, believes that he has strength

or luck enough in him to beat the devil in the long run, though he does not care to withhold a compliment to the subtlety of the demon. But days wore on, and Tom—in the agony of a hopeless soul—began to execrate the past, and to howl at the future. A day or two, a few hours, and all would be known! The chaplain of the prison preached repentance, and the culprit writhed at the adjuration as though beneath the lash. It was impossible *then* to repent; it was only to add to crime a mockery of goodness. Nevertheless, he would confess. Yes; he would lift away somewhat of the load of lies that stifled his heart; though it was no use—he knew that—still he would do it. No harm at least could come of it; and it would be something, at least for him, to do any deed not hurtful to somebody. And so—he would confess.

Whereupon the turnkey, by direction of the governor, proceeded to St. Giles's dungeon, and delivered the summons. Death was in Blast's face—death in his eyes—and he mumbled with a dying tongue. His awful look, his silent fight with the mastering power of nature, subdued in St. Giles all thought, all purpose of revenge. He saw before him the man who had stamped upon his yielding childhood the ineffaceable brand of infamy—he, the felon reserved for the gibbet, beheld the villain who had in very babyhood pre-doomed him—and yet he viewed him with compassionate, with charitable looks, for he saw a human creature fast subsiding into churchyard clay. St. Giles moved silently to the dying man; and, after a brief mental struggle, revealed by an outward shiver, held forth his hand to his old and early enemy.

"I can't take it, St. Giles—I can't take it—'twould scorch me—burn me—like—like where I'm going," muttered Blast; and still he fought for breath. "Don't speak—nobody—make no noise. And you, sir, God bless you—if I may say God—you, sir, take down what I say;" and Blast motioned to the magistrates' clerk, prepared to take the deposition. "Now then," cried Blast, and with an effort, the result of indomitable will asserting its last, he sat up in the bed, and controlled the horrid working of his face, the convulsive movement of his limbs. He looked terribly calm as he thus delivered himself—"St. Giles, poor boy! never stole no horse—I did it—I tricked him into it—I had the money for it—I made a thief of him—and I transported him. I wish I could live to be hanged for it—don't laugh, I do—so that they shouldn't hurt a hair of that poor cretur's head. It's been a bad world to him all along, but I've been the worst devil in it to him—and I know it. I'm a-goin' where I must answer for it. There—that's all I have to say. He was wrongfully transported, and had a right to come back agin. If any harm comes to him for

it, it's murder, that's all. I've got nothin'—nothin'—more to say," and the poor wretch fell back in the bed.

St. Giles sprang forward and had already one arm about Blast's neck. The dying man unclosed his burning eyes, and, for a minute, gazed intently at his victim. Then his chest heaved and laboured, and with a loud sob, his heart loosed itself in tears, that trickled down the hands of him, who had been his baby victim. Not a sound, save the sobbing of remorse, was heard. And then Capstick coughed loudly, as was his wont, on strong occasions. Bright Jem shrank into a corner, and plied his arm across his eyes.

"God bless you, St. Giles—yes, now I can say it, I didn't think I could—God bless you, St. Giles. Whatever fortin 's left for you in this world, you 're all right, *you* are in—in—" and Blast, as though choking, paused.

At this moment, an old acquaintance of the reader's, Kingcup, schoolmaster, entered. He was followed by a clean, comely looking child; no other than that babe of the gutter, little Jingo. When St. Giles, wandering from the town of Liquorish into its green neighbourhood, met Bright Jem, it may be remembered that a minute after young Jingo fell into the hands of his brother. Bright Jem was bound on an errand to the schoolmaster; and St. Giles, revealing himself to his early friend, took with him the vagabond boy, and briefly telling the story of his destitution, of his certain destruction in the hands of Blast, implored and induced the good old man to receive the child, Bright Jem—Capstick was for a time to know nothing of the matter—answering for necessary charges. Kingcup, one of the unrewarded heroes of the world—a conscientious village schoolmaster—received the child as he would have snatched him from fire or flood. And the boy, in a brief time, unconsciously vindicated the wisdom, the goodness of Almighty Nature, that does not—however contrary the old-fashioned creed—send into the world crowds of infant villains; suckling scoundrels who grow in wickedness as in stature; and would seem only sent upon earth the better by shadows, to bring out the lights of respectable life. Jingo looked clean and happy; and had lost that sly, sidelong, hound-like glance which at the breast he had been taught to copy even from the eyes that gazed down upon him. Early teaching this—but even at this moment, how many the pupils!

Bright Jem, saying no word to St. Giles, had written to Kingcup to come to the prison with his pupil.

"Why—who 's that?" cried Blast, fixing his eyes upon the child; "it can't be him—no, it can't be. That 's how he would have looked, poor cretur, if—if he 'd had a mother; if—" Here the boy held forth his hand. Blast seized it, and snatched him

close to the bed. At the moment, it was plain death was in the man's throat—was creeping into his eyes; for he drew the boy's face close to his own, and tried—and tried to read it—and seemed baffled—and still tried. And then he passed his dying hand over the little face, and a smile—a smile of knowledge and assurance—gleamed in the features of the dying man. It was their last living expression: the next instant they were blind clay.

There was silence for a minute: and then Capstick, with a loud prefatory cough, observed to the magistrate, "The deposition is quite in form, I hope?"

"Perfectly right, sir. With deponent's mark, and duly witnessed. All in form, sir," answered the clerk.

"I should like to have a copy," said Capstick, as he turned away with the magistrate.

"Certainly; I can't see any objection. Nevertheless, my dear sir, and though I very much admire your energy in this affair; nevertheless, it would be very wrong of you to hope: don't hope," said his worship.

"I can't help it," said Capstick; "it 's my infirmity: an ailment I trust I shall carry to the grave." And the muffin-maker, urged by the inveteracy of the disease, walked from the prison with the magistrate, affirming that it was impossible for any Christian government to hang a man in the face of such a deposition.

The magistrate paused, smiled, and, making a farewell bow, blandly observed—"Impossible! My dear sir, you 'll pardon my frankness; but—I must say it—I wonder that you, as a member of Parliament, don't know better—very much better—than to say impossible. Good morning."

Time passed, and the trumpets brayed in the streets of Kingston the advent of justice. She had come with nicest balance, to weigh the sins of men—with mercy let us hope somewhere in her train to wait upon her.

The trial of young St. James took precedence of the trial of St. Giles. This was to be expected. "Betters first," as a simple dweller in Kingston observed, in easy gossip, to a neighbour. The trial of a nobleman, and for murder, too, was a great event for the town; and the small traders and inhabitants, in their artless way, hailed it with all due honour. Stalls—even as at joyous fair time—were set up in the streets; and gingerbread, and ginger-nuts, were offered to the faint and hungry. People put on their best clothes, and at parlour windows, in public houses, and at street corners, airily discussed the question, "whether his lordship would be hanged or not?" The general opinion,

however, ran in favour of his lordship's vitality: not from the conviction of his merits in the case; certainly not; but from a stiff-necked belief in a prejudiced people that "they 'd never hang a lord, though he 'd killed fifty men." And yet, had the good populace paused to think, they might have acknowledged that Tyburn Tree had borne such fruitage.

The day of trial dawned. Never before had ostlers been so busy in the town of Kingston. "Never such posting in the memory of man," was an opinion generally held in the stable-yards; "never so much nobility and gentry in Kingston afore," was the satisfied thought of innkeepers at the bar. Nobody could have thought that the murder of a money-lender—who, it had been profanely uttered in the street, was better out of the world than in it—would have done so much good for the trade of Kingston.

The town was all life—three parts fashionable life. Beaux and beauties had flocked from London, significantly to testify, by their presence, to the high character of the interesting nobleman about to appear in the dock. The court was opened, and in a few minutes—there was a murmur—a buzz—a profound hush—and young St. James stood a prisoner at the bar, the jury—twelve worthy housekeepers of Surrey—looking at him as they would have looked at one of the royal lions in the Tower; a dangerous, but withal a very majestic and interesting creature.

In the first quarter of an hour, everybody showed signs of greatest interest in the case; then, by degrees, anxiety subsided, and ere half an hour had passed, a sudden stranger, uninformed of the awful business of the time, might have thought the court assembled, merely met for casual talk. However, in due season Mr. Montecute Crawley touched the heart of the assembly. Great was the rustling of silk, when he rose for the defence. He rose, he said, with great difficulty. It was plain that he was inwardly wrestling with great emotion. Already, the tears seemed very close to his eyes, and, at every instant, might be expected to run over. The learned and lachrymose counsel, in his defence, took a very comprehensive view of the case. If ever he had felt the acuteness of pain—the intensity of suffering from the conviction of his great inability to grapple with a difficulty, it was at *that* moment. However, he must not shrink, and would therefore throw himself upon the best feelings of the jury. The learned counsel said it was impossible that the distinguished nobleman at the bar could have any malice against the deceased, who had brought a violent death upon himself—and he, the counsel, could only fervently hope that the wretched man was well prepared to meet the sudden summons—by the vehemence of his passion. It

had been proved in evidence, that the deceased had, from his hiding-place, sprung upon the prisoner; who, with a human instinct, quickened by nobility of blood, drew his weapon, and death ensued. Nobody could regret the issue more than himself; but the jury must bear this in mind. A man—a nobleman—believed himself assaulted by a sudden enemy; and the law of self-preservation—who could deny it?—was paramount to any law, with all humility it might be said, made by king, lords, or commons. The prisoner was of noble blood. More than a thousand years ago, the blood that beat at the prisoner's heart was ennobled, and—even as a river (he would say, the Nile), flooding from an undiscovered source, widening, deepening on, bearing new glories as it runs, and with increasing and fertilising magnificence enriching the family of man—so might it be said of the blood in the veins of the nobleman at the bar, that from the time whereto the memory of man ran not to the contrary, it had descended from sire to sire, blessing and benefiting generation after generation. He, the counsel, would beg the jury to consider the effect of even an imaginary blow upon such a man—upon one, whose Norman ancestors had leapt on this soil of merry England, making it their own—on one whose progenitors had bled at Poictiers, and Cressy, and Marston-Moor, and—but he would not weary the attention of an enlightened jury by too minute an enumeration of the debts owed by England to the family of the distinguished individual who, at that moment unfortunately—he could not but say, unfortunately, stood at the bar. No: he would leave the number to be filled up by the intelligence and imagination, and gratitude—yes, gratitude as Englishmen—of the jury. He would only again beg them to consider the effect of an imaginary blow upon a man whose family had given generals to the field, dignitaries to the court, chancellors to the——

Here the learned counsel—whose eye-lids had for some time reddened and trembled—burst into a flood of tears, sank down upon his seat, and sobbed in his handkerchief. The effect was very fine upon all in court. Ladies plied their scent-bottles, and one or two, less guarded than the rest, violently blew their noses. After a decent time allowed to grief, Mr. Montecute Crawley, putting down emotion with giant will, was again upon his legs.

He had nothing more to say. With every confidence he left the case of the nobleman at the bar in the hands of the jury; convinced that they would arrive at such a verdict as would to the last day of their lengthened lives contribute to the sweetness and soundness of their nightly sleep, and the prosperity and happiness of their waking hours.

The judge summed up the case with unusual brevity; and ere

Mr. Montecute Crawley had well dried his eyes, the jury returned a verdict—"Not guilty."

Let us pass the burst of applause that shook the roof; the crowding of friends about the innocent nobleman, no longer a prisoner; with his almost instantaneous departure for London in the carriage-and-four, confidently prepared and waiting for him at the prison walls. St James is a free man. But our story has yet a prisoner—St. Giles.

The next day was appointed for the trial of the returned convict. The court was attended by a few idlers. Capstick, Bright Jem, and Becky—her face scalded with tears—were present; and Mr. Tangle, as solicitor for the prisoner, was very busy, and spoke in terms of considerable tenderness to the Member for Liquorish, assuring him that at least heaven and earth should be moved to save St. Giles. "I tell you, sir," repeated the attorney—"I tell you, I'll move both heaven and earth. My interest can go no further."

"Not yet," said Capstick, and his eye twinkled.

"Silence in the court!" exclaimed the officer, and the trial was continued.

It was a very matter-of-fact case. The prisoner at the bar had been convicted, when quite a boy, of horse-stealing; evidence was given of judgment, his identity was proved, and there could remain no doubt—nevertheless, if the jury had a scruple the prisoner ought to benefit by it—no doubt of the crime of the culprit in the dock. Blast's dying declaration of the innocence of St. Giles was put in; but the judge, biting the end of his quill, shook his head.

Mr. Montecute Crawley, not being very well from the wear-and-tear of his emotions on the previous morning, albeit retained by order of St James to defend St. Giles, was compelled to resign his brief to his junior, who would be, Mr. Crawley comfortingly observed, a very promising young man some day. The young gentleman, evidently satisfied himself with his defence of the prisoner, and, indeed, had hardly ceased to acknowledge the encouraging nod of the leader, when the judge, having shortly summed up, the jury, not stirring from the box, returned their verdict—"Guilty."

There was a heavy fall upon the floor, and poor Becky, pale as a corpse, was carried out.

The judge placed the black cap upon his head. "Prisoner at the bar," said the judge, "you have been tried by a jury of your fellow-countrymen, and have been found guilty of a most heinous crime against the peace of our sovereign lord the king, and the laws of this realm. I am sorry that there is nothing in your case that pleads for the least chance of mercy. Far be it from me to add to your suffering at this moment by any harsh word of mine.

Nevertheless, it is only due to society that I should briefly dwell upon the career that has brought you to this most dreadful condition. It appears that, altogether heedless of the blessings of a Christian society and Christian influences, you, at a very early age, in fact, as a mere child, broke the commandment that says, 'Thou shalt not steal.' Your thefts, I grant, were petty ones; but robbery grows with growth. You proceeded in your reckless conduct, and were at length—I have the conviction before me—condemned to death for horse-stealing."

"My lord, the deposition!" cried Capstick.

"Take that man into custody, if he speaks another word," thundered the judge to the officer. Then, after a pause, he continued.

"The deposition shall be forwarded to the proper quarter, but I would solemnly advise you, prisoner at the bar, to indulge in no vain hope upon that head. As I have already said, you were condemned to death for horse-stealing, when the royal clemency intervened, and your sentence was commuted to transportation. You were sent to a country, blest with a salubrious climate and a most fertile soil. And you ought to have shown your gratitude for your deliverance from a shameful death by remaining in your adopted land. However, your natural hardness of heart prompted you to fly in the face of the king's mercy, and to return to this kingdom. The punishment for this crime is wisely ordered by our law to be death. This punishment you will suffer. In the time, however, that will elapse ere you are called from this world, you will be attended by a Christian minister, who will instruct your darkened mind with the glorious truths of Christianity; will teach you their goodness, their abounding mercy, and, above all, their charity for all men. You will have the means of this consolation; I implore you, make use of them. And now, the sentence of this court is, that you be taken to whence you came, and be hanged by the neck until you are dead."

But, St. Giles was not hanged. No. St. James repeated the good work of his boyhood, and—aided by Capstick, who made his maiden speech in Parliament on the question, calling the attention of the minister to the confession of Blast—St. Giles was pardoned. He married Becky, and lived and died a decent shopkeeper. Indeed, he had so far beaten the prejudices of the world, that long ere he took his mortal departure from his parish, he had been intrusted with the duties of churchwarden.

St. James, a few weeks after the trial went abroad, made the grand tour, returned, married a duke's daughter, and supported to the utmost the true dignity of his order. St. James had been schooled even by St. Giles: taught the best and highest lesson of

life from his association with the born outcast and baby felon. The man of conventional nobility had learned to see through want, and misery, and crime, the natural man: still the born aristocrat of all created things, however degraded from the hour of his birth by the ignorance and the injustice of our social conditions. And St. James made noble amends in his maturer years for the harmful vanities of his earlier life. Many and many a pilgrimage did he make to the Hog-Lanes, that, like hidden ulcers, rot the social body; still tainting outward beauty with concealed loathsomeness. If St. James learned the solemn truth that to make man respect his fellow, he must be bred in self-respect—and that self-respect is not a plant of darkness, growing and blossoming despite of gloom and filth—(as well look for water-lilies in common sewers,)—if St. James learned this, and learning, laboured to shed abroad the humanising truth, he owed its first knowledge to his fitful companionship with St. Giles; to his strange association with a wretched being who, first sinned against by society, became the avenging sinner. How much of what our legal and moral codes alike denounce as guilt—how much of this sinfulness, has the same inevitable cause? Hence, our nobleman proved it by all his after life, how much St. James in his brocade, may profitably learn of St. Giles in his tatters.

Mr. Crossbone, baulked in his hopes of court preferment, retired to the country, we fear—against his conscience, but in deference to his pocket—to cultivate the weeds of life. He, however, had the subsequent satisfaction of transporting Mr. Robert Willis for highway robbery; an operation performed at the cheapest cost to Mr. Crossbone, as the robber pillaged him of only four and two-pence and a tobacco-stopper.

A metropolitan tombstone still attests the pleasing fact, that Mr. Tangle died at the age of eighty-two, "a faithful husband, an affectionate father, and an unswerving friend. His charity was as boundless as it was unostentatious and unknown." Thus speaks Tangle's tombstone; and who—save it may be the recording angel—shall contradict a tombstone?

And Clarissa? She shrank from the world; and lived and died the daily life and death of an outraged, wasting heart. In her happy, hopeful youth, she had been sold to bondage; a slave, condemned to the most loathsome servitude. Her fetter was of gold—how light, how small a link! yet such gold is toothed with canker, and eats into the very core of the heart. And so Clarissa died; another victim numbered with the thousands gone and—to come.

Capstick—the man with gall in his words and balm in his

deeds—Capstick at the end of the first session, confessed to Bright Jem, the proved vanity of Parliament. He would sometimes sit—as he declared—late on a summer's night, and—despite of the real atmosphere about him—could scent the bean-blossom wafted from his garden. He would doze in his seat, and—when an hon. member was making his twentieth repetition of a sounding common-place—would dream of the cuckoo calling him home. And so at the end of the first session, Capstick, the late mutlin-maker and philanthropic misanthropist, to give due warranty to the scandal and malice of a few of his neighbours, who declared he only sought parliament that once there, he might well butter his dry bread; so Capstick took office. He became for a time steward of the Chiltern Hundreds, and few men could give better account of their stewardship; for, retired to the Tub, he cultivated his garden—whistled to his birds—talked to his bees—and, if mingling amongst men, he had at times a playful tartness in his words,—his daily acts were full as honeycomb with abounding sweetness.

Bright Jem shook off ten years as he crossed the threshold of the Tub. And there he lived in simple and affectionate companionship with his old master. And there St. Giles, and St. Giles's wife, and St. Giles's little ones, would make their yearly visit: a visit that caused to Bright Jem his only two anxieties; namely, that the peas might in the opinion of Mrs. St. Giles beat any peas in Covent-garden; and the strawberries might grow bigger and bigge every twelvemonth in the eyes and mouths of the children.

PUNCH'S LETTERS TO HIS SON.

PUNCH'S LETTERS TO HIS SON.

Dedication.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN,

(WHOEVER HE MAY BE.)

My Lord,—Take my word for it, you have greater reason to be proud of this Dedication than of your wand of office. Having read it, you may, for the remainder of your official life, walk in the eyes of all men, at least half an inch higher. As, however, persons in your exalted rank are not always inevitably promoted to the eminence by the invincibility of their reasoning powers, or the subtilty of their wit, it may perhaps be necessary for me to explain to you why, from this day forward, you should enjoy an increase of official altitude. Few things irk a man more, than to know he has inflicted the heaviest, yet withal the sweetest, obligation on another, who nevertheless obstinately remains in the most Stygian ignorance of the fact. Fancy, my lord, a pearl-diver—your lordship may possibly guess the perils of the trade—having plunged to the bottom of the oozy deep; strange, horrid monsters about him; the ocean looming and rolling over him; fearful thoughts of his wife and little ones stirring in his breast; imagine him groping for the treasure which, it may be, is destined to repose upon the palpitating bosom of an Eastern queen. He rises to the surface of the deep—he is on dry land. Happy diver! he hath fished up a union—

> "Richer than that which four successive kings
> In Denmark's crown have worn!"

He believes his fortune made; the precious pearl has enriched him, his wife, and little ones for life. Alas, no! the wayward-ness

of fate denies to his pearl the asylum of a crown—refuses to it the ear of a queen. No: that pearl, by the very wilfulness of destiny, is flung among the wash of pigs, and is swallowed with a grunt by that bacon hog, altogether unconscious of the treasure to be dissolved into nothing by his porcine chyle. Now he must be a hardhearted man—a lout, a churl—who would deny to the poor pearl-diver the barren satisfaction of pinching the pig's tail, to assure the beast, as well and as reasonably as a beast can be assured of anything, that he has swallowed the jewel—that he has the worth of I know not how many bars of gold in his ignorant bowels. No; justice—who though she may not choose to use them, yet keeps her scales and weights in every man's breast—justice declares that the man shall have the rightful privilege of pinching the pig's tail; or, in familiar phrase, that he shall not lose his pearl without—as the vulgar hath it—having a squeak for it!

Now, my lord, hold me not guilty, of any unseemly parallels. It is true, in the following Letters you will, I know, meet with as many pearls as you ordinarily see at a royal drawing room: nevertheless do not for an instant believe that I libel you as a hog. No, my lord, repress, annihilate the basest thought. Yet, consider, that as this Dedication, like a patent iron coffin, is expressly hammered out to last until doom's-day—consider, my lord, how many chamberlains, and how various their capacities, may exist between this time and the world's end! It is to meet all possible accidents that may occur to all future Lords Chamberlain, that I here insist on dwelling upon the obligation I have laid them under, by dedicating to them these adamantine Letters.

Having resolved to publish, I looked serenely round the world for a nominal patron. At first I thought the Lord Chancellor, as legal guardian of the deaf-useless rich—for there is not one of these Letters that may not be considered as the orphan inheritor of invaluable wealth, that is, if wisdom always went as at the trunkmaker's, by avoirdupois weight,—yes, I thought the genius of the woolsack might fitly protect these costly epistles; but reflecting upon the many orphans, the many lunatics, too, still upon his lordship's hands, I instantly resolved not to swell the number of his responsibilities, and, therefore, thought again.

Next, the rattle of the Prince of Wales fell upon my ear. "These Letters," said I, "shall be dedicated to the Prince: they will especially serve to commemorate the day on which his Royal Highness was taken out of long frocks—the brevity of every epistle will touchingly illustrate the shortness of his coats." My

wife exulted at the idea. "The very thing," said she; "for, insn't there our last boy, Ugolino? he'll want something as he grows up; and the Prince can't do less than make him a tide-waiter." The mercenary speculation—for all women are not mothers of Gracchi—determined me to give up the Prince of Wales. "No," said I, "the dirty motive-makers of the world will be sure to misconstrue the act; they will swear that PUNCH was only loyal that he might be prosperous; they will say that he only worshipped the rising pap-spoon that his own brat might catch the fragments that fell from it." My heart swelled at the suspicion, like a new-blown bladder, and I struck off from my list the Prince of Wales.

I next looked into the Houses of Parliament. Here, I thought, are people whom the world sometimes persist in taking for my blood relations; and, it must be confessed, that both in the Upper and Lower Senate words are spoken and capers cut, that —were I to be impeached for either—it would, I fear, be very difficult for me to prove an *alibi*. "Why, there's fifty of 'em, at least," said my wife, "that you can't persuade the world ar'n't your own kith and kin." "And for that reason, wife," I replied, "I will have nose of 'em. No; I am fully aware of the relationship myself; but it's their dirty pride that chokes me—their arrogance that makes them sometimes pass me, even in Parliament-street, as if I was to them an alien in blood, in manners, and religion. And why? I get my living in the open air. Well; didn't Julius Cæsar, the Duke of Marlborough, do the same? And when Wellington and Wagstaff were on service, didn't they labour, too, *sub dio?* Can you gather laurels in a back parlour—can you grow bays upon a hearth-rug?"

It was then, my lord, I resolved to dedicate these Letters to you. The reason is obvious:—

THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN NEVER DID ANYTHING FOR PUNCH!

You have graciously let me alone; and I have flourished under the benignity of your neglect. I pitch my stage wheresoever I will, in Westminster or not, without your warrant: I act my plays without your license. I discourse upon the world as it is, on the life that is moving about us, and on the invisible emotions of the heart of man, and pay no penny to your deputy. I increase in social importance; for I am not withered by your patronage.

Had fate made me, for these last two hundred years, the master of a play-house, how different might have been my condition! Had I, since the Act which made you protector and censor of the dramatic sisters, Melpomene and Thalia—poor girls! there are people who swear you have treated 'em worse than Mrs. Brownrigg used her apprentices—had I felt your patronage, how often had I been *banco rotto;* how often had I played—understand me, not paid—a "doleful dump" in Portugal-street!

Wherefore, then, do I dedicate to you these Letters?—From an exalted spirit of independence. I owe you nothing, my lord, and have flourished upon the obligation.

PUNCH.

INTRODUCTION.

In humane compliance with the incessant and affecting supplication of many hundred bosom friends, these epistles are for the first time submitted to print. Yes, I swear it: and to solemnise the oath, I am ready to kiss a bank-note of any amount above fifty pounds,—I am wholly won to type by the entreaties of sundry fathers, for whose children I have—as, indeed, I feel I ought to have—yearnings of peculiar affection.

These letters were originally addressed to, I verily believe, my own son. In them, I have endeavoured to enshrine the wisdom of my life. In them, I have sought to paint men as they are—to sketch the scenes of the world as they have presented themselves to my observation—to show the spring of human motives—to exhibit to the opening mind of youth the vulgar wires that, because unseen, make a mystery of common-place.

I am prepared to be much abused for these epistles. They are written in lemon-juice. Nay, the little sacs in the jaws of the rattle-snake, wherein the reptile elaborates its poison to strike with sudden death the beautiful and harmless guinea-pigs and coneys of the earth,—these venomous bags have supplied the quill that traced the mortal sentences. Or if it be not really so, it is no matter; the worthy, amiable souls, who would have even a Sawney Bean painted upon a rose-leaf, will say as much; so let me for once be beforehand, and say it for them.

The child for whose instruction and guidance through life these letters were especially composed, has passed from this valley of shadows—he is dead. Death, in its various modes of approach, is an accordant mystery with the mystery of life. To one man it comes in the guise of a grape-stone—to another in the aspect of a jackass eating figs. To my dear son death appeared in the tempting shape of a fine South-down wether. Yes, mutton was his fate.

Had it pleased fortune to make me a man of bank-paper, the life of my darling child might have been spared. Then had I

shown that the dear boy acted only in obedience to an irresistible impulse born with him—strengthened by maternal milk—made invincible by oft indulgence. Then had I proved that the child in what he did was but the innocent accessary of his unconscious mother.

I have dried my eyes and will endeavour to explain myself.

Three months, to a day, before the birth of my child, we had not for the previous eight-and-forty hours rejoiced our loyalty with the sight of his majesty's head even upon copper; and yet—be Mercury my judge!—we worked most gallantly—handed round the hat most perseveringly—laughed most jocosely,—and all with bleeding hearts and a slow fire burning in our bowels. Nathless, halfpence came not. At that time, I remember, we were terribly run upon by Parliament. The madness of politics took away the people's brains; and literature, and art, and Punch, while the mania lasted, were—strange infatuation of men!—neglected for the House of Commons.

Four-and-twenty times in four-and-twenty streets had we acted that day, and yet no coin fell in the oft-presented hat. With thoughts of an empty garret, a supperless destiny if money came not—of my unrepining, much-enduring wife—of all her wants in that her time of weakness,—with all these horrid memories blazing in my brain I rattled away, and laughed, and cried and crowed *roo-t-t-it-roo-toot* in every key and cadence, and heard myself hooted by the mob as a merciless, unfeeling rascal, without one touch of humanity for aught that breathed. Alas! at that moment I had an ulcer in my heart big as a rat-hole.

Evening came on, and with it cold and drizzling rain. We were preparing for our twenty-fifth representation, when a delicious odour suddenly steamed through the canvas, and on the instant, a voice—to my foolish ear sweet as the multitudinous voices of cherubim—cried—

"*Hot, hot—all hot—mutton pies all hot!*"

My dear wife placed her hand upon her heart—she knew I had not a penny—softly sighed, then fell in a dead swoon into my arms. There she lay, and still the retreating voice rang through the night—

"*Hot, hot—all hot—mutton pies, all hot!*"

At length my spouse returned to life. With the fine delicacy, the mighty self denial of her sex, she breathed not her wish. But I looked in her eyes, and read—*Mutton pies—all hot—hot, hot!*

And who, after this, can wonder at—much more blame—my darling, blighted son for his uncontrollable affection for Southdown, or in fact any other, wethers?

Oh, ye thousands of philosophers, dozing, dreaming, yawning

in garrets—oh, ye broad-brimmed, long-skirted, ankle-jacked sages, who look into men's skulls as men look into glass hives—who untwist the cords of the human heart carefully yet surely as the huswife untangles a skein of silk—could not twelve of ye be found to go into a box to discuss, and by your verdict dignify, as pretty a case of morals and metaphysics as ever came from the Press-yard? But no; drysalters, hardwaremen, yea, ropemakers (for my innocent boy never thought to challenge the last juryman as peculiarly interested in the verdict), judged him, and of course he was lost.

As a further illustration of the benighted intellect of the jury, it was argued against my boy—my doomed one from the womb!—that he had on a previous occasion shown a violent love for a bale of Welsh flannel, the property of a hosier on Ludgate-hill. Of course, he had. It was the inevitable result of his constitution. The flannel was part of the sheep. What he did, he did from necessity. He was organised for the act. The jury—asses!—called it a second offence. Why, it was one and the same thing. Nay, had my child made off with a gross or two of lamb's-wool socks, and half-a-dozen Witney blankets, a philosophic jury would have considered the collective acts as but an individual emanation of pre-organised temperament; and, pitying the mother in the son, have returned a triumphant acquittal. But what knew the jury of affinities?

Had I been rich I could have proved all this, and my boy had been saved upon a constitutional eccentricity. As it was—but I will no longer dwell upon the theme. Enough for the curious. My boy's fate may be found in the archives of Seven Dials.

These letters will, I trust, testify my paternal solicitude. It is my pride, that they were treasured by my son, and were bequeathed by him, with other effects, to the individual whose adroit attention to my boy in his last moments was witnessed by hundreds, and commented upon in the handsomest way by various distinguished writers of the English press. It is to the liberality of this individual I am indebted for the original documents; for, elevated far above the petty spirit of huckstering, he at a word took a pot of porter for the treasure, and with a significant wink and a light-hearted laugh, wished me joy of my bargain.

LETTER I.

THE BRIGHT POKER.

My dear little Boy,—So early as cock-crow this morning, your dear mother reminded me that you were this day nine years old. The intelligence delighted, yea, and saddened me. My sweet little pet, you will think this strange: I will explain myself. When I remembered that I was the author of a rational being, of a creature destined, it might be, to have a great stake in this world, and a still greater in the next, my heart rose within me, and I was in a transport of happiness. When, again, I reflected that I had given to the earth an intelligent animal, doomed, perhaps, to continual fisticuffs with fortune; marked, branded with poverty; sentenced to all the varieties of the elements; a cold, hungry, houseless, haggard, squalid piece of human offal; a thing with the hopes and aspirations of man, now hardened by the injustice of the world to callous calculating insensibility, now stung into the activity of craft,—when I saw you ragged and despairing, an outcast in this life, and hopeless for——but then I banished the picture from my brain. "Things," I thus communed with myself, "must not be thought of after this melancholy fashion; otherwise little boys will become extinct."

You are now, however, called upon to remember—for you are sufficiently old to understand the obligation, and I shall therefore no longer address you as a mere child—that to me you owe your life. It is now nine years (metaphysicians would say something more,) since you opened a debtor account with me: an account never to be payed off by laying down the principal, but to be duly acknowledged by the punctual payment of interest in the shape of love, duty, and obedience. Understand, you owe me your life: whether you were, or were not, a party to the debt at the time it was contracted—whether at my own whim and caprice I fixed upon you an obligation, never in reality thinking of you at all, matters not: you are my debtor, up to the present period, for nine springs, as many summers, the like number of autumns, and not one less winter. Consider the hold I have upon you—remember the debt that will be every year increasing, and be docile, be obedient.

It is related of St. Francis that, being destitute of children, he made to himself a family of snow-balls; and, that, when made, he gave to them pretty and endearing names, and took them in his arms, and hugged them to his bosom, and doubtless thought himself quite a family man. Now, my dear child, I am not a St. Francis—(though I think I have at least patrons under other names in the Calendar,)—and am therefore incapable of begetting a snow-ball for my heir; but shall I feel less for my own flesh and blood than the first of the grey coats cared for congealed water?

My affection, then, speaks for you in this, and shall be audible in many, letters. The world is opening upon you. In a few years you will enter upon that fearful struggle for the daily shoulder of mutton—that terrible fight which every day shakes the earth to its foundations—that never-ceasing squabble which, when Jove is melancholy—for who shall say that Jove himself has not his megrims?—makes laughter for his majesty and his court assembled. How, then, to get the best of the fray—how to secure the best cut of the shoulder? My son, give heed to a short story.

The widow Muggeridge was the cleanliest of huswives. You might, in vulgar phrase, have eaten your dinner off her floor; the more especially as plates for two were never known upon her table. Her household gods were a scrubbing brush and scouring paper. She fairly washed the world from under the feet of her husband. She insisted, as she worded it, upon his being nice and comfortable; and therefore plentifully slushing the sick man's chamber, as he lay, knocked down by a fever, Muggeridge died of cold water and a clean helpmate. When assured of her husband's death, it was the touching regret of the new-made widow that he had not staid to change his shirt. If any man ever took pleasure in his grave, it must have been Muggeridge; for never since his marriage had he known what it was to enjoy a piece of wholesome dirt.

And here, my dear child, let me advise you, if it should be your destiny to wed, and live in humble state, to avoid by all means what is called a clean wife. You will be made to endure the extreme of misery, under the base, the invidious pretext of being rendered comfortable. Your house will be an ark tossed by continual floods. You will never know what it is to properly accommodate your shoulders to a shirt, so brief will be its visit to your back ere it again go to the wash-tub. And then for spiders, fleas, and other household insects, sent especially into our homesteads to awaken the inquiring spirit of man, to at

once humble his individual pride by the contemplation of their sagacity, and to elevate him by the frequent evidence of the marvels of animal life,—all these calls upon your higher faculties will be wanting; and, lacking them, your immortal part will be dizzied, stunned, by the monotony of the scrubbing-brush, and powered, past the remedy of perfume, by yellow soap. Your wife and children, too, will have their faces continually shining like the holiday saucers on the mantel-piece. Now, consider the conceit, the worse than arrogance of this: the studied callous forgetfulness of the beginning of man. Did he not spring from the earth!—from clay—dirt—mould—mud—garden soil, or compost of some sort; for theological geology (you must look into the dictionary for these words) has not precisely defined what, and is it not the basest impudence of pride to seek to wash and scrub and rub away the original spot? Is he not the most natural man who, in vulgar meaning, is the dirtiest? Depend upon it, there is a fine natural religion in dirt; and yet we see men and women strive to appear as if they were compounded of the roses and lilies of Paradise, instead of the fine rich loam that fed their roots. Be assured of it, there is great piety in what the ignorant foolishly call filth. Take some of the saints for an example. Off with their coats, and away with their hair-shirts; and even then, my son, so intently have they studied it, and been interested by the lowly origin of man, that with the most curious eye, and most delicate finger, you shall not be able to tell where dither ends or dirt begins or ends.

I have, however, been led from my promised narrative.

The widow Muggeridge, in her best room, had two pokers. The one was black and somewhat bent; the other shone like a ray of summer light—it was effulgent, speckless steel.

Both pokers stood at the same fire-place. "What!" you ask, "and did the widow Muggeridge stir her fire with both!" Certainly not. Was a coal to be cracked—the black poker cracked it; was the lower bar to be cleared—the black poker cleared it; did she want a roaring fire—the black poker was plunged relentlessly into the burning mass, to stir up the sleeping heart of Vulcan; was a tea-kettle to be accommodated to the coals—the black poker supported it. "And what," methinks you ask, "did the bright poker!" I answer nothing—nothing save to stand and glisten at the fire-side; its black begrimed companion, stoking, raking, burning, banging, doing all the sweating work. As for the bright poker, that was a consecrated thing. Never did Mrs. Muggeridge go to Hackney for a week to visit her relations, that the bright poker was not removed from the grate, and, carefully swathed in oiled flannel, awaited

in greasy repose the return of its mistress. Then, once more in glistening idleness, would it lounge among shovel and tongs; the jetty slave, the black poker, working until it was worked to the stump, at last to be flung aside for vile old iron! One dozen black pokers did the bright poker see out; and to this day—doing nothing—it stands lustrous and inactive!

My son, such is life. When you enter the world, make up all your energies to become—A Bright Poker.

LETTER II.

WORDS AND THEIR COUNTERFEITS—HOW TO RECEIVE AND PASS OFF THE SAME, WITH OTHER USEFUL COUNSEL.

My dear Boy—I am much pleased with your last letter. Your remarks on the copies set you by your excellent master, Dr. Birchbird, convince me that schooling has not been lost upon you. However, beware lest you look too closely into the significance and meaning of words. This is an unprofitable custom, and has spoilt the fortunes of many a man. You may have observed a team of horses yoked to a heavy waggon; may have heard the bells hanging about their head-gear tinkle, tinkle, tinkle. The bells are of no use—none, save to keep up a monotonous jingle; although, doubtless, Giles the waggoner will assure you that the music cheers the horses on the dusty road, and, under the burning sun, makes them pull lithely and all together. Now, there is a certain lot of sentences in use among men, precisely like these bells. They mean nothing—are not intended to mean anything—but custom requires the jingle. Thus, when you meet a man whom you have seen, perhaps, thrice before—and he declares that "he is delighted to see you," albeit it would give him no concern whatever if you were decorating the next gibbet—you must not, for a moment, look a doubt of his joy, but take his rapture as a thing of course. If he squeeze your hand until your knuckles crack—squeeze again. If he declare that 'you're looking the picture of health," asseverate upon your honour that 'he has the advantage of you, for you never saw him look better." He may at the time be in the last stage of a consumption—you may have a hectic fever in your cheek; no matter for that; you have both jingled your bells, and with lightened consciences may take your separate way.

I could, my dear child, enlarge upon this subject. It is enough

that I caution you in your intercourse with the world, not to take words as so much genuine coin of standard metal, but merely as counters that people play with. If you estimate them at anything above this, you will be in the hapless condition of the wretch who takes so many gilt pocket-pieces for real Mint guineas: contempt and beggary will be your portion. Thinking yourself rich beyond the wrath of Abraham Newland in the golden promises of men, you will risk a kicking from the threshold of the first verbal friend whom you seek for small change.

Your last copy, you tell me, was—

"Command you may your mind from play."

You object to this as an unreasonable dogma. You say, you cannot command your mind from play; and insinuate it to be an impertinence of your master to assume any such likelihood on your part. In fact, you deny it in toto. More than this; you had the hardihood to contest the propriety of the text with your worthy master, who, you further inform me, appealed to your moral sense through your fleshly tabernacle, and—for some minutes—left you not a leg to stand upon.

I cannot, my dear boy, regret this last incident. It will, I hope, impress upon your mind the necessity of taking certain sentences current in the world for precisely what they are worth, without balancing and calling a crowd about you to show their cracked and counterfeit condition. Dr. Birchbud, when a boy, had written—

"Command you may your mind from play."

a hundred and a hundred times in fine large text. Well, did he believe in the saw any more for that? Did he think you expect you to believe in it? "Then, wherefore"—you may ask in your ignorance—"did he scourge me, for not believing?" Foolish boy! it was for not seeming to believe. This is probably the treatment you will meet with in the world, if, with outrageous candour, you attempt to test the alloy in so much of its verbal coinage—coinage that is worn thin with handling; which wise men throw the true value of and pocket for what it's worth, and which only fools (and the worst of fools they call martyrs) ring, and rub, and look at, and having done so, screech out,—"Bad money!"

Now, my dear boy, the next time the worthy Doctor Birchbud gives you the copy—

"Command you may your mind from play,

look at it with sudden reverence, square your elbow with deter-

mined energy, take up your pen as though you were about to book the text "in the red leaved tablet of your heart,"—and having, in solemn silence, made the required number of copies, take the book up to your master,—and, as you give it in, let your countenance appear at once informed and dignified with the beautiful truth you have consigned to paper.—may let your whole anatomy seem at that moment absorbing the grand lesson you have inscribed in the copy-book. This done, you may return to your seat, and—whenever the master's head is turned aside—you may go on with your game of "odd or even" under the desk with Jack Rogers, play at "soldiers" on your slate, or any other pastime that may take your fancy. It is sufficient that you have gravely registered your belief, that—

"Command you may your mind from play."

The registration is enough; whether you can, or will, is altogether another matter.

This subject reminds me of an inquiry you once made, at a time when you were too young to comprehend the matter. On the paper covering a square of Windsor soap were printed the Royal Arms. I recollect your charming smile at the lion and unicorn; and the childish certainty which prompted you to inquire the meaning of the royal legend—

"*Dieu et mon droit.*"

That, my child, it is now proper for you to learn, means, "God and my right." When you shall have mastered something more of the History of England, and shall have read all that certain kings have done under that motto, you will then more fully understand what I have written to you upon taking words as counters, not as real things; of the necessity of always seeming to believe them the true coin, and the danger of crying counterfeit. "God and my right!" Ha, my dear boy, there have been men, who because they would stand out from the rest of the world, and would not believe in the divine origin of these syllables, have had their heads sliced like turnips from their shoulders, and their quarters hung up like sides of bacon over city gates; whilst other men, not one jot more believing, have, with a knowing wink at their fellows, and thrusting their tongues in their cheeks, bowed like willow wands to the words, and found their reward in beef, ale, and, in fulness of years, death in a good bed.

You say you employed the last half-holiday in birds'-nesting. This was very right. I would have you train your mind to

manly sports. In due season, with the grace of fortune, you will be able to hunt hares, those pestilent and dangerous creatures having been especially provided to exercise the muscles and the intellects of man. Should you obtain that position in the world, which it is my fervent prayer you will arrive at, you may also be permitted to join in a royal hunt, a pastime of the highest dignity, utility, and humanity. For instance, you will chase a stag, for the express and only purpose of terrifying it; and having put it to an hour or two of serviceable agony, you will have it caught and conducted back to the pasture, to be left for future enjoyment. As, however, these must be the sports of your manhood, you are quite right now to begin with linnets and sparrows. You, my dear son, will one day have to quit the paternal roof for the great world. By reflecting on what the parent linnets and sparrows suffer, deprived of their young, you will have some wholesome idea of the anxiety of your loving parents under a like affliction.

You ask me to send you some corking-pins that you may spin cockchafers upon them. Your mother sends them, with her blessing and her best love. I trust, however, you will turn this amusement to your profit. As, under the blessing of heaven, I may probably article you to Mr. Abednego, the attorney and money-lender of Jewish prejudice, I would counsel you to take particular notice of the conduct of the cockchafer, when buzzing and spinning with the pin through its bowels—that you may know exactly how long it will live, and how much pin it will bear. This knowledge, for wisdom comes to us from so many channels, will be of great use to you as a disciple of Abednego, when making out your costs.

LETTER III

OBJECTS WORTHY OF DISCOVERY—SHORT STORY OF MAN AND HIS DUCK.

My dear Boy,—You tell me you have been reading *Captain Cook's Voyages*, and are so much pleased with them, that you would start round the world on a voyage of discovery to-morrow morning. You will seriously offend me by any repetition of this folly. Leave such mad adventures to fools and zealots. Stay you, and make greater discoveries, at home.

Do you know the reward of the simpletons who peril life, and

forego all the comforts of the fleshly man—for what? To give, it may be, their name to an iceberg, and their carcases to the sharks. Columbus discovered America, and was at last rewarded with fetters for his pains. Who can point out the two yards of dust that cover Cabot the mariner, who found a home and a retreat for tens of thousands? Ask of the sea, in which of its multitudinous caves repose the bones of Hudson?

The known world is quite large enough for you; let fools, if they will, leave their snug arm-chairs, and sea-coal fires, to extend its boundaries. What matters it to you where the Niger begins or ends? Have you not the pleasant banks of Thames, the tens of thousands of unsophisticated natives thronging its shores; all of them ready to exchange their gold-dust for any glass-beads you may bring for barter, if, by your confidence and swagger, you can pass off the glass for veritable diamonds? If you can, great and sufficient will be your reward. If you cannot, you will undergo the rightful penalty of your ignorance. But the thing is done every day. Do not imagine they are the only savages whose skins are scot-colour, who wear rings through their noses, stick parrots' feathers in their woolly hair, and bow to Mumbo Jumbo as their only deity. My dear boy, you will find amongst the whitest, the most carefully-dressed, and most pious of London, absolute children of nature; men, as it would seem, expressly made for the support of their fellow-creatures, as shoals of herrings are every season spawned expressly for the nutriment of whales. Therefore, trust yourself to no canoe on the Senegal, but prosper on the banks of your paternal river.

You would like to be a discoverer? Very well. London is a boundless region for the exercise of the greatest sagacity. Leave to dreamers the solution of the shortest cut to India—find you the north-west passage to the pockets of your fellow-creatures. Discover the weaknesses of men; they will be to you more than the mines of Potosi, bring you richer merchandise than cargoes of gold-dust and ivory.

If, however, forgetful of my paternal lessons and unworthy of your progenitor, you address yourself solely to what is absurdly termed the dignity of human nature and the amelioration of the condition of mankind,—if you choose to make one of the fools who have lost their labour and their soap in the vain attempt to wash the negro white,—why, starvation, obloquy, and wretchedness in every shape attend you! Your heart's blood may dry up in a garret, and—if your carcass be not arrested by the bailiff—you may rot in the pauper's corner of the parish church-yard. To be sure, after some hundred years or so, it may be some comfort for your ghost to slip from your forgotten grave, and

make midnight visits to the statue that may be at length erected to the genius that died, the debtor of a twopenny loaf to a benevolent baker. If you will be contented with such reward, try of course to elevate your species. If, however, you would rather enjoy present sixpences, why then spin pewter plates on a balanced sword, or poise a donkey. My dear boy, work for ready money. Take no bill upon posterity: in the first place, there are many chances against its being paid; and in the next, if it be duly honoured, the cash may be laid out on some piece of bronze or marble of not the slightest value to the original. Sure I am, that no statue or monument is erected to the memory of one who is at length called the benefactor of his race, that the ceremony is not a holiday for famine and all the household furies. They behold in the thing an irresistible temptation to other fools. One late rewarded martyr inevitably raises a new regiment to bleed and suffer.

It is upon this truth—for truth is not always to be disregarded—that I would have you stand: it is upon this principle I would have you eschew all romantic notions of travels to Abyssinia, and voyages to the Pole, for the more profitable discovery of the weaknesses of your fellow-creatures. Are you fond of wild countries, curious plants, rare animals, strange adventures? Plunge into the heart of man. There you will find deserts, poisonous weeds, snakes, and a host of iniquities arrayed against a host. You will also find streams gushing with health, amarantine flowers, cooing doves, and things of divine aspect and heavenly utterance: with these, however, meddle not. No; turn from them, and, spite of yourself, convince yourself that they exist not, that they are the mere phantasma of the brain—the mere offspring of the imagination, that, sickened with arid, burning tracts, sees in its sweet disease palms and silver springs, and in the tinkling of the camel's bell hears the heart-delighting nightingale. Not so with the dreary places and the venomous things. Learn every nook of these; catalogue every object. It is in such spots you are to drive a prosperous trade; it is such articles you are to use in barter. Does not the wise tradesman put on his comeliest looks, and bow lowest to his best customer? Virtue is a poor, paltry creature, buying her miserable penn'orths at miserable chandlers'. Now Vice, Weakness, and Co., are large, burly traders, and "come smug upon the mart." Therefore, make yourself master of their tempers—find your way to their hearts; for they have hearts, even as blocks of marble sometimes contain within them the torpid, sweating toad, "ugly and venomous."

However, in opening an account with this firm, be sure you

never apply to them the names spat upon them by clean-mouthed Virtue. Oh, no! although you know them to be leprous to the bones, you must treat them, must speak of them, as though they were the very incarnation of health. Though their corrupt practices are to the nostril like the foulness of a new battle-field, snuff them as though you inhaled the odours of myrrh and frankincense burning in the temple.

When you have become a scholar in the weaknesses of the human heart, you may then lay them under what impost you will. You may—but I will tell you a little story in illustration of the truth of this.

You must know that the greater number of the inhabitants of Ceylon have it, as their firm belief, that, when dead, their souls will take up their habitation in the bodies of various animals. A wise fellow—too wise to work, and sage enough to be determined to enjoy himself without labour—turned the superstition of his neighbours to constant profit. Whenever his pockets were empty he would rush into the streets, and carrying a live duck in one hand, and brandishing a knife with the other, he would exclaim to the terrified people—

"Wretches, this duck may be your grandfather—your grandmother—your father—your mother—your brother—your sister—your son—your daughter! Wretches! I'll kill the duck!"

Whereupon, men, women, and children would throw themselves upon their knees, and offering what money they had, beg of the man not to kill their grandfather, their grandmother, their son, their daughter, but in the depths of his mercy, and for the sake of ready money, to touch not a feather of the duck!

And the man, pocketing the cash, would walk away, for that time sparing the duck.

My son, you are not an inhabitant of Ceylon, but a denizen of enlightened London; nevertheless, in every city every man has some sort of a grandmother in some sort of a duck.

LETTER IV.

ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

My dear Child,—You say you are anxious to select for yourself an agreeable and profitable profession, and solicit my paternal counsel to assist you in your choice. This brings to my recollection, that your darling mother once begged that I would accompany her to a mercer's, to choose a gown. We entered the shop, and desired an inspection of the warehouseman's commodities. Velvets—cut, flowered, and plain; satins of all colours; sarsnets; silks, shot with thunder and lightning; muslins, poplins, bombazeens, pompadours; all the beautiful products of the loom were graciously taken from the shelves and displayed upon the counter before us. Some two to three hours were agreeably passed in this way; when your dear mother, with one of her sweetest smiles, thanked the shopmen for their trouble, then said, "she thought she could only afford a tenpenny gingham."

My dear boy,—I fear it will be thus with you in your choice of a profession. I may, it is true, unroll an archbishop's lawn before you—may call your earnest attention to a Lord Chancellor's ermine—may request you to feel the weighty bullion of a commander-in-chief's epaulets—to weigh in your hand the gold-headed cane of a court physician,—and when all this is done, you may be compelled to call for the leather apron of a cobbler, or the goose and needle of a tailor.

I wish—and Heaven witness the aspiration—that at your birth the law of primogeniture had bound you apprentice to 15,000*l.* per annum, besides my good-will, when I slept beneath a slab of marble. Such a calling must be a very pretty business, and, believe me, I should have mightily liked to be your master. As fortune has ordered it otherwise, let us look at the professions.

Will you enter the church? Alas! what a prospect lies before you. Can you discipline your mind and body to fulfil the functions of your office? I will at once suppose you a bishop. Can you, I ask it, satisfy your appetite with merely locusts and wild honey? Will you be content with raiment of sack-cloth, or at the best, linsey-woolsey; and can you answer for your conscience that you will, at all times and in all weathers, be ready to make a pilgrimage to the hovels of the poor: to give

comfort to the wretched; to pray beside the straw of the repentant guilty; to show, by your own contempt of the creature blessings of this world, that you look upon the earth as a mere temporary tarrying-place,—a caravanserai, where you are awaiting until called beyond the clouds? Consider it: as a bishop, you will be expected to take your seat in the House of Lords. When there, shall you be prepared, with the rest of your brethren, to set a continual pattern of piety and self-denial to the lay-nobles? Will you be ever prompt—as bishops always are—to plead the cause of the wretched; to stand between the sinking poor and the arrogant rich; and with a voice of almost divine thunder, wake in the callous hearts of worldlings a slumbering conscience for their fellow-men? Will you be in the House of Lords, a lump of episcopal camphor—a bundle of spikenard—a pot of honey? Can you—as all bishops always do—abstain from the lusts of Mammon, and keep your lawn, white and candid as the wings of angels, from the yellow soil of filthy Plutus? Thinking only of the broadest, the shortest, and the best way to heaven,—will you (like all bishops) never meddle with turnpike acts, or job with wooden pavements? Eschewing the vanity of couch and footman (as John the Baptist did, and all bishops do,) will you think only of the carriage of Elisha; and turning from the pomps and vanities of an episcopal palace, can you (as all bishops do) feed humbly, lodge lowly,—hungering only for immortal manna,—waiting only to be called to that home—

"Whose glory is the light of seven suns."

My dear boy, examine yourself, and say, are you equal to all this? I think you are my own flesh and blood, and thinking so, doubt your constancy in this matter. Hence, I would advise you to eschew the church; for unless you could live a life apostolical, as all bishops always do, what disgrace would you bring upon the bench—what slander and a by-word would you be in the mouths of the heathen!

Let us now consider the law, and suppose you called to the bar. Have you the fortune to support your dignity?—Have you, for this is more, that gentleness of spirit, that philanthropy of soul, which would make all men brothers, which would pluck from the hearts of your fellow-creatures, malice and dissent, the foul hemlock and nightshade that poison the sweet sources of human love? Consider the change that has come upon the law and its guileless professors. There was, indeed, a golden time, when you might have amassed a fortune by playing bo-peep with Truth; by abusing, reviling her; by showing her virgin innocence

to be strumpet infamy; by plucking every pinion from her sky-cleaving wing, and making her a wretch of sordid earth: by causing Truth herself to blush for her nakedness.—More, you might have successfully "moved the court" to punish her for the indecent exposure; and thus Truth, by the potency of your eloquence, might have been handed over to the scourging arm of the beadle, whilst Falsehood, your successful client, should have gone triumphant home, in a carriage-and-four, with white favours. Those golden times are past. Then, you might have walked the Hall, gowned and wigged, with a harlot tongue to let for hire, carrying any suit into court, as a porter carries any load; then at the Old Bailey you might even have shaken hands with avowed murder in his cell, and fresh from the blood-shot eye, and charnel breath of homicide, have called Heaven, and its angels, to bear witness to the purity of the cut-throat who had paid you so many golden pieces for your exordium, your metaphors, your peroration; your spattering of witnesses, your fierce knocking at the startled hearts of half-bewildered jurymen; threatening the trembling twelve with midnight visits from the ghost of the innocent creature in the dock, if the verdict went for hemp. This you *might* have done, but this is past. Now, Conscience wigs itself, and sits with open door, giving advice gratis. Therefore, can you afford it in purse? And more; have you the necessary milkiness of humanity—for such is the term simpletons give it—to play the peace-maker between man and man, giving advice, allaying feuds, reconciling neighbour to neighbour, weighing out justice in her golden scales, and charging not one maravedi for the trouble? Can you, as barrister, write over your door—as may now be seen in thousands of places,—"*Advice given against going to law, gratis?*"

In the olden time, I should have advised you to make an effort for the bar; but with the present romantic notions—for I can give them no worthier name—operating on the profession, you can afford it neither in pocket nor in spirit. To such an extent have barristers carried their peace-making quixotisms (of course, considerably assisted by their worthier brethren, the attorneys), that the judges have nothing to do. Already the moth is eating up the official ermine!

Will you be a soldier? Well, I will presume you are a Field-Marshal. A war breaks out: a wicked, unjust war. It may be thought necessary (such a case occurred about a century ago, and may occur again,) to cut the throats of a few thousands of Chinese, for no other reason than that the Celestial Emperor hath, with his "vermilion pencil," written an edict against the

swallowing of British opium. You are ordered for the Chinese waters, to blow up, burn, slay, sink—in a word, to commit all the beautiful varieties of mischief invented by the devil's toy-woman, Madame Bellona. Well, with the spirit that is now growing in the army—a spirit that has lately developed itself in so many bright examples—you are compelled to throw up in "sublime disgust," your Marshal's baton, and, like Cincinnatus, retire to Battersea to cultivate cress and mustard; philosophically preferring those pungent vegetables to laurels stained with the blood of the innocent, dotted with the tears of the orphan. You may then send your epaulettes to Holywell-street, to be burnt for the gold—or sell your uniform to be used, on masquerade nights, at the Lowther Arcade. My dear boy, military glory is not what it used to be. Once people thought it a jewel—a solid ruby. But philosophy has touched what seemed a gem, and has proved it to be only congealed blood.

No, you shall be neither Bishop, Chancellor, nor Generalissimo; but, my boy, you shall be—

But that I'll tell you in my next.

LETTER V.

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING "NOTHING."

In my last, my dear boy, I promised to advise you on the choice of a profession. I hasten to redeem that promise. Then I say to you, strive to be neither bishop, chancellor, generalissimo, nor court physician; but, my beloved child,—be Nothing.

By not trammelling your mind with the subtleties of divinity or law—by maintaining a perfect freedom from the prejudices of a military or medical life,—you will be able to take a more dispassionate view of the world about you; will be the more ready to accommodate yourself to any profitable circumstance that may present itself. Consider how many curates who devote their lives to divinity shiver in a brown-black coat; fight a daily fight with the meanest necessities; and with wife, and it may be half-a-dozen children ill-clothed and ill-fed at home, are paid forty pounds a-year to be pattern pieces of holiness and benevolence to all the country round. The clerk, who to his Sunday duties, unites the profitable trade of soleing and heeling dilapidated shoes, is a nabob; the clerk is not cursed with the brand of a gentleman; he may ply with wax-end and awl—may vend

soap, brick-dust, and candles—run of errands, beat carpets,—do any servile work to make up his income: for Sabbath "amen" being in no way vulgarised by the labour of the week. But the curate—alas, poor man!—he has been to college, and is a gentleman. Thus, by virtue of his gentility, he must be content with beggary, nor soil his orthodox hands with vulgar task-work. He must be satisfied with daily bread in its very literalness, nor dare to hope the luxury of butter. You are not my own flesh and blood, if you would stand this.

Next for the law. I should have no objection to your being called to the bar, as a sort of genteel thing. A wig and gown may often prove a tolerable bait for decently endowed heiresses. They give you the nominal standing of a gentleman, under which character you may make various practical speculations on the innocence of mankind; but for living upon your business, you might as soon hope to make a daily dinner on the flag-stones of Pump-court. Consider, my son, what a thing is a briefless barrister! A cockatrice, that cannot lay eggs—a spider, without an inch of web!

I have no vote for any borough or county; and though in my time I have served multitudes of politicians with votes when in and out of office, there is not one of them who has the gratitude to own the obligation. Hence, what will be your fate if you go into the army? I might—with assistance from a few loan societies—be able to purchase you a pair of colours; but as neither myself nor your mother have any interest with anybody at the Horse Guards, what would be your fate, if unhappily alive, at seventy? Why, still the pair of colours, and, if you have served long in India, a face of orange-peel, and a piece of liver no bigger than your thumb. Glory, my boy, is a beautiful thing in the battle of Waterloo at Astley's; and there, if you have military yearnings, take your shilling's-worth of it.

As for medicine, if you set up in what is called an honourable manner, to kill by diplomas,—you will find the game so beaten and hunted, that 'tis ten to one you beg a patent once a twelvemonth. If, indeed, fortified by your own unauthorised opinion,—you can persuade people into patent remedies against disease and death, disarming the destroyer by a learned name attached to bread-pills or coloured Thames water,—take my blessing, and straightway—having entered into a sleeping partnership with a confidential undertaker—found a College of Health. There is no such golden walk to fortune as through the bowels of the credulous; and when sick, all men are credulous. Pain is a great leveller, alike hurling down scepticism, philosophy, and mere prosaic common-sense. The man, who

before his friends will sneer at a vaunted specific, will sneak out by himself to seek the quack vender of the despised anodyne: in the same way, that fine ladies who profess to laugh at astrology, will disguise themselves in old shawls and bonnets, and venture up dirty lanes and into foul garrets, to consult bed-ridden fortune-tellers on the whereabout and when-coming of their future husbands. If you have any feeling for medicine, and have face and nerve to cry "Quack" lustily—away with you into the market-place, and begin. But if, with the unprofitable pride of science, you would only physic, bleed, and blister on the strength of a diploma, the boy who carries out your medicine shall be happier than his master, and—when he gets his wages—better paid.

Again, then, I say it, my son, be Nothing! Look at the flourishing examples of Nothing about you! Consider the men in this vast metropolis whose faces shine with the very marrow of the land, and all for doing and being Nothing! Then, what ease—what unconcern—what perfect dignity in the profession! Why, dull-brained, horn-handed labour, sweats and grows thin, and dies worn out, whilst Nothing gets a redder tinge upon its cheek, a thicker wattle to its chin, and a larger compass of abdomen. There are hundreds of the goodly profession of Nothing who have walked upon three-piled velvet from their nurses' arms to the grave: men who in the most triumphant manner vindicate the ingenuity of the human mind; for enjoying and possessing every creature comfort of existence, not even a conjurer, nay, sometimes not even a police magistrate, can discover how they get it.

Consider man as Nothing, and what a glorious spectacle! A man following an allowed, a known profession, is a vulgar object, let his in-comings be ever so great: we know his whole mystery—we can tell whence flows his tide of wealth. The Thames is a gorgeous river, but knowing its name, we talk little of its magnificence. 'Tis otherwise with the Niger. The man who with nothing, has all things, is to us a sort of Friar Bacon. We approach him with a feeling deeper than respect. He is the Cornelius Agrippa of our times. We know not that some familiar spirit does not act his bidding. He may, on the contrary, be a king's son by a left-handed marriage. He moves in a cloud of mystery—he is away, apart from the common. We know that if other men were to cease from their ordinary occupations, the whole train of human wants would immediately set in upon them; whilst the man professing Nothing lives, independent, *tabooed*, from all the annoyances of life. Oh, my son! I grant the secret may be difficult to compass; but study

for it—search it out, though your brain become dry and rattle in your skull like a withered hazel-nut—still, once discover how to live with Nothing, and you may snap your fingers at all mortal accident. Nothing, when a successful Nothing, is the nabob of the world!

You will, in your progress through life, be called upon to wonder at the discoveries of Galileo, who swore that the world moved round the sun—and then, or I mistake, that the sun moved round the world; you will hear a great deal of Homer and Shakspere, who shaped out worlds upon paper, and begot men and women with drops of ink: folks will talk to you upon the discovery of the circulation of the blood, and other goose of the like sort, demanding your admiration, your homage, for what they will call the triumph of human genius. Fiddle-de-dee! What should you care how the world moves, or whether it move at all, so you move well in it! As for Homer and Shakspere, the first was a beggar, and for the second—for the great magician, who as people will cant to you, has left immortal company for the spirit of man in its weary journey through this weary world—has bequeathed scenes of immortal loveliness for the human fancy to delight in—fonts of eternal truth for the lip of man to drink, and drink—and for aye be renovated with every draught,—he, the benefactor to the world, could not secure a comfortable roof from the affections and gratitude of men, for the female descendant of his flesh, who withered from the world, almost an outcast and a pauper! Now, the man who can live a long and jovial life upon Nothing, has often (by some strange wizard craft) the wherewithal to bequeath to his heirs. As for literature and science,—tales of fairy-land, and the circulation of the blood,—be it your care to make nothing your Ariel; and for your blood, heed not how it passes through your heart, so that as it flow, it be enriched with the brightest and strengthened with the best.

Be a successful Nothing, my son, and be blessed!

LETTER VI.

PUNCH INTRODUCES HIS SON TO "HERMETICAL" PHILOSOPHY.

WHAT! my dear boy, my last letter has thrown you into a fit of melancholy? You look hopelessly, recklessly, on the prospects of human life, and would fain flee into a hermitage, there to ponder on the mysteries of social humbug—of life and death; the toils and the trifles of mankind? This resolution on your part reminded me that I was the fortunate possessor of a few fragmentary thoughts on the vast subject you would contemplate—of thoughts born in solitude of a restless brain that has long since mingled with the earth. Take them—ponder on them—and for the present be content to know them as—

"FRAGMENTS ON HUMBUG, SOLITUDE, LIFE, DEATH, AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE, BY THE HERMIT OF COSEY-HATCH."

I have thought it wise and pleasant in my solitude, having no ready-money market for my time, to devote my hours on land to the intellectual wants of my fellow-man. The reader, affected by the beauty of my subject, may haply feel a generous curiosity, may yearn to know the condition of the sage who seeks to discourse upon the most vital, the most profound, the most mysterious principle of human society,—for such is humbug. It is the cement of the social fabric. It is the golden cord tying together, and making strong, the sticks and twigs of the world. It is the dulcet bell, whose ravishing sound calls the great family of man to eat, drink, and be merry! Hapless are they, whose leathern ears list not the music; for if they feed at all, at best they feel on draff, and are to the revellers even as swine are to bipeds.

Let not the reader seek to know more of me than, with a most white conscience, I am permitted to tell him. The great events of my life are not my own. I speak without any oracular quibble; I mean this, and no other. The great accidents of my mortal travail have been sold; yea, bartered by me for so many Mint medals, and a stamp receipt given for the payment. Thus it was. In a moment of pecuniary impatience, I offered a choice of the events of my life to a gentleman in want of materials for a popular novel. With a frankness that has been of singular loss to me throughout my existence, I opened the goods unreservedly before him. As market-wives say, I let him have the pick and choose of the lot; kept nothing back for a second

bookstering. Well, the buyer left me without a decent event in my basket. Every picturesque accident, from exaggerated hemlock to the forgery of a will in a moment of virtuous intoxication, was bought, and I confess as much, honestly paid for by the novelist 'fore-mentioned; and, if there be truth in human bargains, as indeed there must be when solemnised by a stamp, for otherwise parents have their opinions,—the incidental property of my life belongs to the purchaser. I have this consolation: my monstrous struggles have affected, delighted, and instructed the world, though labelled with the name of another. Though I have remained, and must remain unknown, my deeds, doomed to the best advantage, have scriptured thousands. Like the ostrich plume waving above the whiter brow of lovely peeress, my life has found its way among the richest, and by comparison the noblest of the earth,—whilst I, the liver, the poor plucked bird, have wandered over barren sand and fed on iron. But this is a story older than quills.

I have nothing, then, of my life at the service of the reader, but that part of it, the poor remnant following the bargain narrated above. This being my own property, I shall invest it in the present volume. My birth and parentage I have sold, and I honestly believe, at their full value. There, however, remain to me a few fragments which, like sweepings of a spicery, though not good enough to season a holiday dish, may give an enduring sweetness to a cold body of philosophy. The cloves and cinnamon which the clean-handed housewife would reject for her pudding or custard, may serve for the dead body of an embalmed Plato. In these days, philosophy itself must be spiced and sweetened, and have its eyes taken out lest it become noisome in the nostrils of society. That too shall sometimes be the most acceptable body of philosophy, which retains the least hint of bowels.

I know not what business women have with goose-quills, beyond that of plucking them from the bird of mischief that the animal may become the better companion for apple-sauce. The later prejudices of the world have, however, concluded otherwise; hence, my maiden aunt, Absalag Jones, excelled all the family in her writing; perhaps it was, that she was the only one of her tribe who wrote bank cheques. My poor father was never so happy as when he could get a pen between the fingers of Aunt Absalag. We grew up, it may be said, with an instinctive reverence, an increasing admiration, of the handwriting of Aunt Jones. Now, I believe it is an acknowledged principle of human action, that what we greatly admire, we often seek to imitate. At all events, it happened so to me. With untiring

energy, I laboured to emulate the flowing delicacy of Aunt Alcshag's pen: and at length succeeded to such a nicety, that a gentleman, a perfect stranger, handed over to me fifty pounds as a reward for my zealous ingenuity.

Women are fantastic animals. I make no flourish of this discovery, indeed, I almost fear that others, it may be in the dark, have stumbled on the hidden truth. My Aunt Alcshag was, however, a living and most energetic illustration of the fact: for it was to be reasonably supposed that she would have felt a flutter of pride at the successful genius of her nephew; that she would have considered his delicate imitation of her calligraphic powers as an elaborate homage to her lost endowment. It was otherwise. Vindicating the prerogative of her sex, she became so capriciously obstreperous, that, respecting even her most violent whimsies, I relinquished the world and all its nothingness, and became that which I now am.

"What is that?" asks the reader.

With a brevity, which I hope will distinguish the small-talk of my future life, I will endeavour to answer the query.

My Aunt Alcshag confined not her inquiries of the whereabout of her ingenious nephew to her personal exertions. Hence, availing herself of the luminous powers of the press, she caused my portrait to be typographically denounced, and as a most touching proof of her regard for me, offered the princely sum of twenty pounds to whomsoever should snatch me from the wily temptations of liberty, and hold me in safe keeping.

I will not attempt to describe the emotions which stirred within my breast, and rose to my throat, as I perused this last affecting evidence of my aunt's regard. Happily, I was diverted from a too intense contemplation of woman's tenderness, by a notice, that, in the same gazette, somewhat irreverently shouldered the manifesto of Aunt Alcshag. From that notice I take these words:—

"A Hermit wanted.—To philosophers, misanthropes, or gentlemen in difficulties, a singularly eligible opportunity presents itself. A nobleman of enlarged social views is desirous of engaging an individual for the term of three years in the capacity of hermit. The party engaging will be required to conform to the most rigid discipline of eremite life. No Irishman need apply; and as the nobleman is desirous of assuring to himself every probable guarantee for the due performance of the contract, married men only will be treated with."

I looked from my Aunt Alcshag to the nobleman of enlarged social views—I wavered but for a moment between my affection, my duty to my aunt, and a new-born, romantic desire to let my

beard and nails grow. In brief, for it is in the result only that the reader is interested, here I am, at this moment, in my hermitage—a snug, weatherproof box, eighteen feet by ten—with an oak table, one stool, one platter, one maple cup, a bed of dried rushes, one blanket, one gown, one hat, one staff. Here I am, on the night of this —— day of ——, in the year of Christian hopes ——, with the bell of Coney-hatch Church jerking twelve. Here have I been these twelve months; and if a neighbouring fountain reflect truly, then am I as reverend and venerable an anchorite, especially about the chin, as any nobleman could desire to spend his cash upon. I have more than once thought—and strange to say, there has been a fearful pleasure in the errant notion—that if in this drear solitude I should be made the subject of a popular murder, my locks and beard worked in brooches, earrings, and bracelets, would realise sufficient from the romantic and the curious to endow sundry anxious persons with becoming fortitude for my untimely loss. I have, however, as speedily banished this vanity as unworthy of my new self—as unworthy of a cell, that, according to a very stringent agreement drawn up by the attorney of Coney-hatch, is to be a shrine for unselfish contemplation; a retreat, wherein the highest powers of intellectual man are, by daily exercise, by nightly discipline, to climb the golden chain of necessity, and strike delicious music from every link.

LETTER VII.

THE HERMIT'S "PHILOSOPHY"—CONTINUED.

How pure this atmosphere! How sweet, with opening lungs and in-drawn chest, to take a long, deep, bacchanal draught of midnight air, cool from the stars and odorous with May! With not a taint of urban smoke—with not the fever-heat of corroding mortal life—to infect the soul with maladies of which men daily die, albeit doctors dream not of the true disease! How grand at this moment to hear, in the profound of night, the heart of the earth beat—beat towards eternity! To feel a new affection, as we recognise a new life—closer sympathies with all that presses upon us! To lose our old habitual eyes, that blink dreamily at common-place; with true vision to see spirits ascending and descending from every blade and leaf; and with ears tuned to the most secret melody of nature—that like a happy huswife,

sings as she toils—list the working of that vast laboratory compassed in yon giant oak!

We can do more. Drop through the earth, and, with strengthening heart and health-obtaining brain, look face to face at death, and see a new-found beauty in his barren bones. We can scan him, talk to him, and see a thousand curious beauties—odd, grave blandishments, in the abused wight; the worthy creature, wronged in our half-knowledge, slandered in the malice of our ignorance. What filthy names—when the broad sun was shining upon us, and we were laughing in the glory of a new doublet and jerkin—have we spat upon him! How have we mauled him, when we have thought of his wicked will with cousin Bridget—a red-lipped creature with the breath of a heifer! How did we rate him for a wretch, a beast, a monster dining upon heart-strings—an ogre that blotted out the beauty of the sun—that put a poison into the violet's leaf—that turned all gracious and all lovely things to hideous, ghastly masquerade!—How did we clench our fist, and stamp at him, as, with reeling brain and bursting heart, we stood at thy grave, O Admetus! and wished ourselves a clod of the valley, to mingle with thy bones!

Fortune is called harlot every hour of the day, and that, too, by grave gentlemen who only abuse the wench before company because they have never known her private favours. Bad as she is, however, let sour-faced Seneca and all the other philosophers of the vinegar-cruet stalk with paper lanterns before her door, they will never bring the romping hoyden into ill repute. No; she will still be visited, prayed to, cajoled, flattered; and when she plays a jilt's trick, will be abused as lustily as ever. Yet, what is this universal abuse—this polyglot reviling—for fortune is damned by all colours and in all tongues,—to the foul, ungrateful, scandalous, mean-spirited, shabby—aye, and hypocritical, abuse of death!

Oh, no! do not believe what is said of death. All folks abuse him, and therefore, if for nothing else, out of the very chivalry of your nature—shake hands with him. No—not hands; that, for a few years at least, is a little too near. But there—give him the end of your walking-stick, and let him shake that. Well done! Now, look at him. Hath he not been scurvily limned? The dirty portrait-painters of the world, learning that the good fellow had so many enemies, have villanously libelled him. Should you recognise, in the fine benevolence now smiling upon you—and surely no chamberlain, with finger on his golden key, ever looked a visitor a sweeter welcome—should you see, in the frank hospitality before you, the sneaking, haggard, noiseless stabber, painted by a million brushes? Is he not all over—

gentleman! Behold his face—his frame! Hath he not the countenance of Adonis, with perhaps a somewhat downward look? The outline of an Apollo? He carries a dart. It is no vulgar implement—no piece of torturing cold iron, to pierce and grope in human bowels, but an arrow from the quiver of Eternal Day. It has been used so much in this thick-skew world, that, to the filmy eyes of men, it has lost its brightness; but it is not so: the immortal ray is under the rust. The meanest, the scurviest abuse has been cast upon all-suffering death. Not one fair gift has been left him. Even the sweetness of his breath has been traduced. Now, madam—nay, put aside your smelling-bottle, and fearlessly approach. There! Death breathes. Is it not an air from Elysium? Amaranth, madam—amaranth!

We are content to take up the abuse of the world as truthful censure—to believe in the hard sayings flung in the teeth of death as well-earned reproach. We condemn him by hearsay; and join in the halloo of an unthinking, ignorant mob. But invite death to a tête à tête: divesting yourself of vulgar prejudice, sit down in a place like this—for you are in my hermitage, reader, and calmly and dispassionately chat with him, and you will find the fine old fellow to have been villanously maligned—shamefully scandalised. You will, to your own surprise, and no less comfort, discover in death the noblest benefactor—the staunchest, truest friend. All the naughty things you have heard of him will seem to you as the gossip of cowards—the malice of fools. All the foul paraphernalia—the shroud, the winding sheet—the wet heavy clay, the worm and corruption at which serious gentlemen shake their heads, and talk for an hour upon, have no more to do with you than with the hare that may nibble the grass above what once was yours: no more touch you than they touch the red-faced urchins making chains of buttercups and daisies on a falsifying tombstone. When moralising wordmongers seize you by the button, and holding up a skull or old earth-smelling tibia to your eye, look straight down their noses, and tell you that in a short time you will be no more than that they thrust in your face,—tell them, with all reverence, they lie. What will your skull, your bones, be to you, more than your corn that was cut out on Thursday—more than that vile double-tooth which, having tortured you for a fortnight, was, a week since, lugged out of your jaw, and left at the dentist's? It is the vile literalness of people's brains that gives an unhandsomeness to the dead bones of men; that makes them in the grave a part and parcel of the sentient thing; that would make their foulness and disgrace a humiliation to the soaring man. You show me his lordship's cast-off court-suit of tarnished silver: that it is cast off, proves to

me that he has possessed himself of a better. Show me the skull of a dead philosopher—nay, of a defunct pickpocket; commence a dumpish morality on the terrible change of head undergone by sage or thief, and I shall reply to you—It is excellent that it is so; for, depend upon it, the change is for the better; he has obtained a much handsomer article.

We libel the sanctity of death, when we dress it in artificial terrors. We profane it, when, applying a moral galvanism to its lineaments, we make it mope and mow at the weak and credulous.

The truth is, we have made too much a mystery of the commonplaces of death: we have made scarecrows of skeletons, instead of looking upon them with a sort of respect—as we look upon the hat, coat, and breeches of one we once loved,—of one who once wore the articles that were a necessary part of his dress for this world, but that in fact never made any portion of that thing, that essence, which we knew as he. You say, that was his thighbone: very well—this was his walking-stick. Bone or cane, one was as much of him as the other: he is alike independent of both. I deny that he is changed—that his dignity is in the remotest degree compromised, because his human furniture is nailed in a box, and crammed in a hole. You might as well preach upon the disgrace of walking-sticks, because our friend's bit of dragon's-blood, after sundry domestic revolutions, has been cut into a dibber. To make a death's-head horrible—to preach from its pretended loathsomeness a lesson to the pride of humanity—to extract from it terrors to the spirit of man, whilst yet consorted with flesh and blood,—the churchyard moralist should prove that the skull remains the ghastly, comfortless prison of the soul,—that, for a certain time, it is ordained its blank and hideous dungeon. Then, indeed, would a death's-head be horrible; then would it appal a heart of stone and ribs of steel. But, good sexton-preacher, when now you show me a skull, what do I look upon? The empty shell, through which the bird has risen to the day.

I have learned this in my hermitage—learned it, sitting cheek by jowl with death, talking over his doings, and deeply contemplating the loveliness of his attributes.

LETTER VIII.

CONCLUSION OF THE "HERMETICAL" PHILOSOPHY.

I HAVE learned another trick in this solitude. I have learned to separate the twin natures with which, it is my belief, every man is born, and to sit in judgment upon the vices, the follies, the high feelings, and grovelling appetites, that make up the double me. Make a trial of the process, reader. Quit the world for a season. Look boldly into yourself; and however high may have been your notion of the cleanliness of your moral temple, you will, if you look with steady, courageous eyes, blush and marvel at its many dirty little holes and corners, the vile, unswept nooks—the crafty spiders and their noisome webs. And in this temple, to your surprise, you will behold two pulpits for two preachers. In the innocency of your knowledge you thought there was but one divine, and that a most respectable, orthodox, philanthropic creature; punctual in his discourses, exemplary in his discipline—indeed, the very pattern of a devout and cheerful man. You look, and behold, there is another preacher, a fellow with no more reverence in him than in a Malay amuck; a pettifogging, mean-spirited, all-wit quick-witted, shuffling scoundrel, whose voice, too, in the throng and press of the world has appeared to you so like the voice of the good, grave gentleman whom you deemed alone in his vocation, that you have a thousand times, without reflection, followed his bidding—unhesitatingly obeyed his behests, and only now, when you have set apart a season for consideration, only now perceive the imposture—recognise the counterfeit.

"What!" you exclaim, "and was it he who prompted me with that bitter answer to poor inoffensive Palemon?" "Was it he who bade me button up my pocket and growl—'No,' to such a petitioner on such a day?" "Was it he who whispered me to cross the road, and cut to the heart the ruined, shabby-coated Damon?" And still further considering the matter, you remember that the interloper monitor, the fellow whose very existence you never suspected, has had nearly all the talk to himself; the grave gentleman, whose voice has been so well imitated, and whom you thought your pastor and your master, having been silenced, out-talked, by the chattering of an unsuspected opponent. I say it, you are twin-souled. Step into my hermitage. Submit to wholesome discipline of thought, and, be

assured of it, you will, in due season, be able to divorce self from self; to arraign your fallen moiety at the bar of conscience; to bring against it a thousand score of crimes, a thousand peccadilloes, all the doings of the scurvy rascal you bear within you, and whose misdeeds are for the first time made known to you.

Well, the court is open.

Who,—you cry,—is that beetle-browed, shuffling, cock-eyed knave at the bar? Is he a poacher, a smuggler, a suborner of false testimony, a swindler, a thief?

Gently, gently, sir: that unfortunate creature is your twin-soul. It was he who in the case of Mr. Suchathing advised you to—

God bless me! I remember—don't speak of it—shocking! —I'm very sorry.

And it was he who, when poor widow Soandso—

There, hold your tongue! I recollect all about it. How have I been deceived by that scoundrel! But then, how could I ever have believed that I carried such a rascal about me?

For my own part, I am firm in the faith that I should never have discovered my own twin varlet had I not shut the door upon the world and taken a good inside stare at myself. No; my hair would have grown grey and my nose wine-coloured—for it hath a purpureal weakness,—and as a distinguished statesman, whose name I forget, once said, I might have patted the back of my naughty twin soul, deeming him a remarkably fine sample of the article; and so gone on, working for a handsome epitaph, and dying with a Christian-like assurance that I had earned the same. I might have lived and died thus self-deluded, but for this retreat so happily opened to me by the illustrious nobleman aforesaid.

"*A work of this nature is not to be performed upon one leg; and should smell of oil, if duly and deservedly handled.*"

Such is the solemn avowal of a fantastically grave philosopher, on the completion of his *opus magnum;* but surely that vaunt hath a more fitting abiding-place in the present page. My subject, too, like that of my brother philosopher, from its innate dignity, its comprehensive usefulness, might employ the goose-quills of a whole college. It were easy to tell off at least five hundred men—many of them having the ears of kings, and what is more, the purse-strings of nations at their command—all of them, by nature and practice, admirably fitted for the work. From their very successes, the world has a claim upon them for

the encyclopædic labour. However, until the time arrive when these men, touched by a sense of their ingratitude, shall repair the wrong, let the present little book receive the welcome due to good intentions. I am content, in the whirl and mutation of all mundane things, to be trumped by a minister, a cardinal, a philosopher, a commercial philanthropist, by any one or one hundred of these. When such men shall have grown sufficiently ingenuous to respond to the crying wants of their fellow-creatures, and shall publish Humbug *in extenso*, I shall sleep quietly beneath the marble monument which the gratitude of my country will erect to my memory, although this little volume, superseded by the larger work, shall be called in like an old coinage, and no longer be made the class-book of the young, the staff of the middle-aged, and the solacing chronicle of the old.

Imperfect as the work may be, it would, I feel, have been impossible to write at all upon Humbug amid the delicious distractions of a city. Is it asked, — wherefore? Alas! the writer would have been confounded by the quantity of his materials. Solitude—continued, profound solitude—was necessary to the gestation and safe delivery of this book. I have endeavoured to show that the true solemnities, the real sweetnesses of death—the mystery of our inner selves, which said mystery we walk about the world with, deeming it of no more complexity than the first mouse-trap, — are only to be approached and looked upon in their utter nakedness when safe from the elbows and the tongues of the world. Now, if life be a mystery, Humbug is at once the art and heart of life. A man may, indeed, get a smattering of moral philosophy in a garret within ear-shot of the hourly courtesies of hackney-coachmen; but Humbug, though she often rides in a coach of her own through the highways of the city, like a fine lady, suffers her pulse to be felt only in private. Humbug is the philosopher's Egeria, and to be wooed and truly known in secret.

Think you, reader, there is no other reason for the sundry prorogations of Parliament, than that the excellent men (selected only for their wisdom and their virtue from their less wise and less virtuous fellows,) having generously presented so many pounds to the state, their services are for a time no longer required? Such is not the profound intent of prorogation. Its benevolent purpose is to send every senator into healthful solitude, that he may fortify himself with a frequent contemplation of his past votes; that he may call up and question his twin soul, and rejoice himself to know that the Dromios within Him have given their voices in accordance — that one of the

sneaking gemini, out of the baseness of expected gains, has not cried "Ay," when its nobler fellow stoutly intended "No!"

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CONCLUSION OF THE "HERMIT'S" FRAGMENTS.

LETTER IX.

ON THE "BEAUTY" AND "LUXURY" OF TRUTH.—THE UNALLOYED GUINEAS

So, my dear child, you have had enough of philosophy—have read enough of the speculations of the Hermit of Coney-hatch, to feel that your yearnings for solitary contemplation were but a passing weakness; to know, that it is in the bustling world about you, true wisdom finds its best, its most enduring reward? Parchment, my dear child, though writ and illuminated with all the glories of the human brain, is a perishable commodity: now, gold in bars will last till the world crack.

I now come to the principal subject of your last letter,—"the beauty of Truth."

My dear boy, truth is, no doubt, a very beautiful object; so are diamonds, pearls, rubies, emeralds; but, like those sparkling, precious things, it is by no means necessary to your condition of life;—and if sported at all, is only to be enjoyed by way of luxury. Beware, lest a vain conceit should ruin you. The nobleman, the man of independence, may speak truth, as he may wear a brilliant in his breast, worth a hundred guineas. Now, as you must be content with at best a bit of Bristol-stone, with a small imitation of the lustrous reality, so, in like way, can you not afford to utter the true sparkling commodity at all times. Do not suppose, however, that I would have you never speak the truth. Pray, do not misunderstand me. You may, as a man of the world, and a trader who would turn the prudent penny,—you may always speak the truth when it can be in no way to your advantage not to utter it.

At the same time, my beloved boy, take heed that you obtain not the evil reputation of a liar. "What!"—I think I hear you exclaim,—"your advice, papa, involves a contradiction." By no means. What I wish to impress upon you, is the necessity of so uttering your verbal coinage, that to the superficial eye and

careless ear, it may have all the appearance, all the ring of the true article. Herein consists the great wisdom of life. The thousands who have grown rich by its application to all their worldly concerns are incalculable. The world, as at present constituted, could not go on without lying. And, I am convinced, it is only the full conviction of this fact that enables so many worthy, excellent people to club their little modicum of daily falsehood together, for the benevolent purpose of keeping the world upon its axis.

For a moment, consider the effect produced in London alone, if from to-morrow morning, for one month only, every man, woman, and child were to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. You have read of towns besieged, of cities sacked, of the unbridled fury of a sanguinary soldiery; but all this would be as sport to the horrors of this our most civilised metropolis. Gracious Plutus! Think of the bankruptcies! Imagine the confessions of statesmen! Consider the internal revelations of churchmen! Only reflect upon the thousands and thousands of—at present—most respectable, exemplary people, congregated in the highways and market-places, making a "clean breast" to one another,—each man shocking his neighbour with the confession of his social iniquity, of his daily hypocrisy, of his rascal vice that he now feels and cockers like a pet snake in private! If all men were thus to turn themselves inside out, the majority of blacks would, I fear, be most alarming. We might have Hottentot chancellors, and even Ethiopian bishops!

A wise German, named Goethe, has observed—"There is something in every man, which, if known to his fellow, would make him hate him." How, then, could the world go on with this reciprocal passion of hatred? Philosophic statesmen, conscious of this fact, have therefore leavened every social institution with a necessary and most wholesome amount of falsehood. Hence, too, we have what are called legal fictions. Hence Justice, the daughter of Truth, debauched by Law, gives, with a solemn smirk, short weight to the poor, and a lumping pen'orth to the rich.

What are the fees paid to hungry, hundred-handed office, but offerings exacted by falsehood? What is the costliness of Justice, but the wilful extravagance of lying—the practical mendacity of life? Truth, by a paradoxical fiction, is painted naked; and Justice is robed in plain, unspotted white. Why, the old harridan must have as many gew-gaws—as many big-beaded necklaces—brooches—pins—chains, and armlets, as the wife of a Jew bailiff. These things she must have, or what does she with the presents made to her—the fees exacted?

I tell you again and again, all truth will not do in this world. I will give you a short story, in illustration of the reality of this.

How, or by what accident, they escaped from the Mint, was never known, but certain it is, that one hundred guineas of pure gold, without the least alloy, were once upon a time issued to the world. Old Gregory Muckly, by chance, obtained half-a-dozen pieces of this coin, which, together with a few other pieces, were carefully hoarded in a worsted stocking: and when Gregory was safely deposited in churchyard clay, they became the rightful property of his son Hodge.

Hodge was a simple, honest creature; caring nothing for the pomps of the world;

> "The sum of all his vanity, to deck
> With one bright bell some fav'rite heifer's neck."

Business, however, brought him to London. Well, before he returned to Gammon Farm, he would purchase a London present—a bran new scarlet shawl for sister Suke. Two guineas did Hodge, with fraternal self-complacency, set apart for this gift. Caught by the truthful assurance exhibited in a mercer's window that the stock was "selling off under prime cost," Hodge thought he was sure of at least a three-guinea shawl for two. Hereupon, he entered the shop; rolled his eyes from side to side, seeking the radiant present for sister Suke.

"Have you a nice, bran new scarlet shawl for two guineas?" asked Hodge.

"Sir," replied the shopkeeper, "you come at a lucky moment: we have the most delicious article—the most wonderful scarlet. To anybody else, sir, it would be three guineas and a half; but as you have frequently been a customer to us"——

"Nay, nay," cried Hodge, "I was never here before."

"I beg your pardon, sir; humbly beg your pardon—another gentleman like you," said the tradesman.

"I'm no gentleman, neither," said Hodge; "and all I want is, you to show me the shawl."

"There, sir," said the mercer, throwing the shawl upon the counter; "there's a scarlet."

"Ha! ha! so it be—like a poppy," chuckled Hodge.

"A poppy, sir,—a poppy's brickdust to it," said the tradesman.

"Nay, nay, not so," cried Hodge; "and I think I've seen more poppies than thee."

"Ha! ha! no doubt, sir—very true. Well, I assure you, to anybody else this article would be three guineas and a half; but to you, we'll say two."

"There they be," said Hodge; and he laid down the two unalloyed guineas on the counter.

As the tradesman took up the coin, a shadow fell upon his face; and turning to his shopman, he whispered, "Run for a constable." Then addressing himself to Hodge, he said—"Walk this way, if you please."

In two minutes Hodge was in the mercer's back parlour; in five, in the custody of a constable; and in ten more, arraigned before a magistrate, being charged with an attempt to pass off bad money.

"Look at the things, your worship; look at their colour—feel 'em—they'll bend like pewter; and to attempt to pass such pocket-pieces upon an honest tradesman,—really!" and the mercer was bursting with indignation.

Hodge's defence was not listened to, and he was sent to gaol for two days, until a proper officer from the Mint could be in attendance to pronounce judgment on the suspected guineas.

"Indeed, this is curious," said Mr. Testem, the Mint functionary; "but I don't wonder at your suspicions: the fact is, these guineas are *too good*." Mr. Testem then narrated that a hundred pieces of coin, of pure, unalloyed gold, had been accidentally issued, and that Hodge's two guineas were of them.

My son—he who in this world resolves to speak only the truth, will speak only what is *too good* for the mass of mankind to understand, and, like Hodge, will be persecuted accordingly.

LETTER X.

EVERY MAN HIS OWN APPRAISER.—LEGEND OF THE EIGHT LEG.

YOUR last letter, my dear son, annoyed, oppressed me. What! you wish you had been born an Esquimaux, a Chippewaw, a Hottentot, rather than a member of the most civilised, most generous nation (as every people modestly say of themselves) on the face of the earth. Ungrateful boy! is this the return you make me for the very handsome present of your existence,—is this your gratitude for being called out of nothing to become an eating, drinking, tax-paying animal?

Despondency, my child, is the slow suicide of the mind. Heaven knows what I have suffered at the hands of the world! —how, with my heart bleeding into my very shoes, I have still chirped and crowed *roo-tooit-tooit*, despising while I laughed with and chattered to the reeking rascals, niggard of their pence, who still thronged and gaped about me.

> "Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view,
> Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
> Made old offences of affections new."

Nevertheless, if now and then my heart has been a little slack, I have braced it up again with my drum, and looking upon life at the best as composed of just so many pleasurable sensations, I have enjoyed myself as often as I could, which I have thought the very wisest way of showing my gratitude for my existence. When I could not obtain large pleasures, I put together as many small ones as possible. Small pleasures, depend upon it, lie about as thick as daisies; and for that very reason are neglected, trodden under foot, instead of being worn in our button-holes. We cannot afford to buy moss-roses at Christmas, or camellias at any time: and so, all the year round we couple buttercups with vulgarity; and the lovely, odorous things that grow in the hedge-side, we let wither where they grow, for no other reason than that the king's highway is not a royal garden.

At the same time, my dear boy, I would not have you copy the contentment of your father. Contentment is very well in a pastoral; and I have seen something which called itself Contentment, sitting smugly at a small-coal fire, enjoying its crust and half-a-pint of beer in a tin mug on the hob,—only because it would not stir itself to get the port and olives, that with very little exertion were within its reach. Though I know this to be pusillanimity, and not contentment, nevertheless, my dear child, I cannot altogether acquit myself of it. Be warned by your sire. I might, with my genius, have trod the boards of a play-house,—have had my name upon the walls, in type that blacking-makers should have envied; I might have danced quadrilles in Cavendish-square on my off-nights, and been trundled about the town in my own air-cushioned carriage; for I have all the qualifications in the highest degree which lead to such a golden result.—Of this I am assured by their success as poorly and extravagantly copied by another: but no, I was doomed to be a street vagabond, and came into the world with a base taste for mud in my infant mouth, and an ear throbbing for drum and pandeans. Hence, I have—when doing my best—been scoffed at, and abused by

fish-wives, when, with the sagacious application of the *same* powers, I might have been pelted by heiresses with nosegays from the boxes!

My child, know not diffidence: it is an acquaintance that hourly picks your pocket—that makes you hob-and-nob with fustian, when otherwise, you might jostle it with court ruffles. Receive this for an axiom: nineteen times out of twenty the world takes a man at his own valuation. A philosopher—I forget his name—has called the human soul, on its first manifestation in this world, thickly veiled as it is in baby-flesh—a blank sheet of paper. Now I, my son, call every full-grown man at his outset in life, a piece, not of blank, but of *bank-paper;* in fact, a note, in all things perfect save that the amount is not written in. It is for the man himself to put down how many pounds it shall pass for; to snatch an eagle-quill, and, with a brow of bronze and eye of brass, to write down

£ One Thousand

or else, with shaking hand and lips of indigo, to scratch a miserable, pauper-stricken, squalid—

£ One

It is, I say, for the man himself to give value to his own moral paper: and though, I grant, now and then the prying and ill-natured may hold up the article to the light to search for the true water-mark, the owner of the note has only to swagger and put the face of a Cæsar on the transaction, to silence every scruple.

As an instance, my dear boy, of what perseverance will do—of what an inexorable advocacy of merit (or fancied merit, for that is the thing) will do for the professor,—I will give you a short story, drawn from a Dutch annalist of the sixteenth century.

Serene and balmy was the 9th of June morning, 1549, when three men dressed as heralds, and superbly mounted on piebald horses, appeared in the streets of Utrecht. Immediately behind them, mounted on a mule richly caparisoned, rode a man, or rather a human bundle—a hunchback, with his right leg less than a goose's over-roasted drumstick: the leg was, moreover, bowed like a pot-hook: and, as at first was thought, that its deformity might be fully seen, was without hose or shoe; in

plain words—it was a naked leg. The dwarf was followed by six horsemen, handsomely arrayed, and strongly mounted.

The procession halted before the burgomaster's door, when the heralds, putting their trumpets to their lips, blew so loud a blast that every man's money danced in his pocket. The crowd with gaping mouths and ears awaited the proclamation of the herald, who thus unburthened himself:

"Let it be known to all corners of the creation, that our most noble, most puissant master, now present, the right valorous and worthy Vandenhoppenlimpen, has the most perfect right leg of all the sons of earth! In token whereof, he now exhibiteth the limb; whereat, let all men shout and admire!"

On the instant, the dwarf cocked up his withered stump, self-complacently laying his hand upon his heart; and at the same moment the crowd screamed and roared, and abused and reviled the dwarf, whilst some market-women discharged ancient eggs and withered apples at him,—until the procession, followed by the roaring populace, made their way back to their hostelry.

The next morning, at the same place and like hour, the same proclamation was made. Again the undaunted dwarf showed his limb, and again he was chased and pelted.

And every day for six months, the unwearied heralds proclaimed the surpassing beauty of Vandenhoppenlimpen's right leg, and every day the leg was exhibited. And after a time, every day the uproar of the mob decreased; and the leg was considered with new and growing deference.

"After all, we must have been mistaken—there surely is something in the leg," said one contemplative burgher.

"I have some time thought so," answered another.

"'Tisn't likely," said a third, "that the man would stand so to the excellence of his leg, unless there were something in it, not to be seen at once."

"It is my faith," said the burgomaster's grandmother—"a faith I'll die in, for I have heard the sweet man himself say as much a hundred-and-fifty times, that all other right legs are clumsy and ill-shaped, and that Vandenhoppenlimpen's leg is the only leg on the earth, made as a leg should be."

In a short season, this faith became the creed of the mob; and, oh, how the neighbouring cities, towns, and villages emptied themselves into Utrecht, to gaze and marvel at Vandenhoppenlimpen's leg! When he died, a model of the limb was taken, and cast in virgin gold, is now used as a tobacco-stopper on state occasions at the Stadt-house of Utrecht.

My child, there are at this moment many Vandenhoppen

limpens eating bread very thickly buttered, from having stoutly championed the surpassing merits of their bowed and bucked right leg.

LETTER XI.

ON THE NECESSITY OF HYPOCRISY—STORY OF THE LEMON MERCHANT.

No, I have no sympathy, my son—none whatever, for you. What! to have scraped a very promising acquaintance with a man of Alderman Billberry's wealth—to have had him more than once nod to you; and then, when fortune—a happy fortune! as it might have turned out—throws you both together in the same Greenwich boat, to lose the alderman for ever! You will say, the alderman acted meanly, dirtily, shabbily; will tell me, that you saw him only five minutes before take twopence in change for a glass of ginger-beer, when, at the same time, he regretted to the trumpeter, who came round the deck to gather for himself and musical companions, that "he had not a copper about him, or would give it with the greatest pleasure." What devil, may I ask you, tempted you to jog the alderman's memory on the ginger-beer and penny-pieces? You will say to me, the alderman told a lie, the alderman acted shabbily; and, therefore, you reproved him; and, what you doubtless think a splendid peacock's feather in your cap, you reproved him with a joke! I shall certainly write no more to you, if I find my letters do you so little service.

My son, never see the meanness of mankind. Let men hedge, and shirk, and shift, and lie, and with faces of unwrinkled adamant tell you the most monstrous falsehoods, either in their self-glorification, or to disguise some habitual paltriness, still, never detect the untruth; never lay your finger on the patch they have so bunglingly sewed upon their moral coat, but let them depart with the most religious persuasion that they have triumphantly bamboozled you. By these means, although you are most efficiently assisting in the hypocrisy of life, you will be deemed a sociable, a most good-natured fellow. Be stone-blind, and you will be benevolent; be deaf, and you will be all heart. To have an insight—or at least to show you have it—into the dirty evasions of life, is to have a moral squint. To lay your finger upon a plague-spot, is to be infected with malice. No: though you meet with men scurfed with moral leprosy, see not the scales,

but cry out lustily, "What perfect gentlemen!" To discover meanness in men, is, in men's opinion, to be strongly tinctured with the iniquity.

Mr. Chaucer, in allusion to the devil, says of him,

"He hath in Jewè's heart his waspè's nest."

Now, what we call the devil, has built—by the agency of his demon wasps, Pride, Avarice, Scorn, Oppression, Selfishness, and others—thousands of nests in the hearts both of Jews and Christians. Well, suppose you have the power of looking into their hearts as though they were so many crystal hives,—suppose you behold in them the rapacious insects—hear their buzzing—almost see their stings; if you cry "Wasps! wasps!" men will shake their heads at you for a malicious, evil-minded fellow; but, my dear boy, clap your hands, and cry, "What a honeycomb!" and you shall pass from mouth to mouth as the "best of creatures." When you have seen something more of the world, you will know that men rarely attribute an exposure of a social evil to an inherent indignation of the evil itself, but to an unhealthy appetite for moral foulness. Then, my boy, will they most virtuously defame you—then will they, in the name of outraged virtue, call you hard, high-sounding names. The wrestlers of old, says Plutarch, threw dirt on one another that they might get a better grasp, and more successfully trip up each other's heels. In the like way, does ignorance or hypocrisy, in the name of virtue, cast dirt upon him who would trip up a giant wrong. There were, doubtless, those among the Philistines—particular and most virtuous friends of Goliath—who called David a very sour-natured little fellow.

It is extraordinary, too, how this scandal will stick upon you; how it will be used to misinterpret all your motives—to give a twist to your most heroic, most benevolent actions. I will suppose that you are crossing a bridge, or walking by a river's side. Well, a nursery-maid—thinking, it may be, of Jack Robinson, whom she is to meet when the child is put to bed—is so far buried in her thoughts that she lets the baby tumble souse into the stream. You may not swim like a dolphin, yet without waiting to take off your coat, or lay your gold repeater on the grass, you leap into the water, and with no small personal risk manage to bring the baby safe to the bank. Well, you think yourself entitled to at least the good opinion of the world for your heroism. Alas! you have been such a bitter person all your life, you have told such disagreeable verities, you have so constantly refused to club in with that conventional hypocrisy that has neither eyes nor nose for social blotch or social taint,

that Detraction denies to you one word of praise for your ducking; but gravely insists that your sole reason for jumping into the river was this,—you *thought you saw* a silver spoon shining at the bottom.

Having obtained a name for ill-nature, or in reality having acquired a fatal reputation for using your eyes, it will be in vain for you to deal in praise of anything. No: the people who profess to know you will, like witches, read even your prayers backwards; will insist that there is some lurking mischief, some subtle abuse, in what appears to be unmixed and heartfelt eulogy. Offer what you will to the world, the world will declare you only deal in one commodity. You will be in the condition of the man who sold lemons. His history being very short, and at the same time touchingly illustrative of the evil I would warn you against, shall be set down in this letter.

There was, in a certain city, a man who sold lemons. From boyhood until forty, he had dealt in no other fruit; and with those who needed lemons, his stock was in good request. And so years passed away, and the man made a tolerable living of his merchandise, though a certain bluntness of manner, a resolution never to take one farthing less of a customer than he first asked, did somewhat keep down the profits of his calling. Throughout the city the man was known by no other title than the Lemon Merchant. At length, but how it came to pass I know not, lemons ceased to be in demand: no man, woman, or child, purchased a lemon—lemons seemed, henceforth, to be the forbidden fruit: crowds of passengers passed the man's basket, but no one spent a single obolus. Want, starvation, threatened our lemon-merchant. What was he to do? It was plain the fashion had turned from lemons, and had set in for nothing but oranges. Well, my son, you would think it was some good genius that whispered to the man, "Give up thy lemon basket; do not vainly strive to huckster with what is now the accursed fruit, but sell what little goods thou hast, and hieing to the market, there buy thee oranges; sweet, delicious oranges; oranges, luscious as the flesh of Venus." The lemon-merchant followed the advice of his counsellor, and selling up all he had in the world, invested the money in a box of magnificent oranges: they were the finest in the market; the mouths of emperors might have watered for them; they were a gladdening picture to the eye—a restorative perfume to the nose. Since the oranges that wooed the lip of Eve in Paradise, there never had been such oranges.

It was a grand holiday, when for the first time our henceforth

orange merchant took his customary stand at the steps of the Church of St. Angelica. His eye twinkled, and his heart swelled with honest pride as he looked at the passengers who thronged by him, and then again looked at the golden fruit pil'ed in his basket at his foot. It was very strange; but though all the orange-dealers about him sold their stock in a trice, although he was left with the only oranges near the church, no one, albeit seeking oranges, offered to buy the fruit of him. At last, the man took heart, and cried to the people as they passed, "Oranges; sweet, sweet oranges! Buy my oranges!"

"Oranges, fellow!" cried the passengers, "what impudence is this? Isn't it clear that there isn't an orange in your basket—isn't it certain that you deal in nothing but lemons?"

It was in vain for the man to bawl "Oranges!" for there was no one who heard him, who did not laugh and sneer, and answer, "Pooh! pooh! Lemons!"

My dear son, once get a reputation (as you have done with Alderman Bilberry) for the acidity of truth, and though your lips, like the lips of the infant Plato, shall distil honey, the world will not believe in the sweetness. Offer what oranges you will, the world will repay the offering with the cry of—"Lemons."

LETTER XII.

ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF BORROWING.—HOPKINS'S UMBRELLA.

You ask me to supply you with a list of books, that you may purchase the same for your private delectation. My dear boy, receive this, and treasure it for a truth: no wise man ever purchases a book. Fools buy books, and wise men—borrow them. By respecting, and acting upon this axiom, you may obtain a very handsome library for nothing.

Do you not perceive, too, that by merely borrowing a volume at every possible opportunity, you are obtaining for yourself the reputation of a reading man; you are interesting in your studies dozens of people who, otherwise, would care not whether you knew A, B, C, or not? With your shelves thronged with borrowed volumes, you have an assurance that your hours of literary meditation frequently engage the thoughts of, alike, intimate and casual acquaintance. To be a good borrower of books is to get a sort of halo of learning about you, not to be obtained by laying out money upon printed wisdom. For

instance, you meet Huggins. He no sooner sees you than, pop, you are associated with all the Cæsars; he having—simple Huggins!—lent you his Roman History bound in best historic calf. He never beholds you but he thinks of Romulus and Remus, the Tarpeian Rock, the Rape of the Sabines, and ten thousand other interesting and pleasurable events. Thus, you are doing a positive good to Huggins by continually refreshing his mind with the studies of his thoughtful youth; whilst, as I say, your appearance, your memory, is associated and embalmed by him with things that "will not die."

Consider the advantage of this. To one man you walk as Hamlet; why? you have upon your shelves that man's best edition of Shakspere. To another, you come as the archangel Michael. His illustrated Paradise Lost glitters amongst your borrowings. To this man, by the like magic, you are Robinson Crusoe; to this, Telemachus. I will not multiply instances; they must suggest themselves. Be sure, however, on stumbling upon what seems a rare and curious volume, to lay your borrowing hands upon it. The book may be Sanscrit, Coptic, Chinese; you may not understand a single letter of it; for which reason, be more sternly resolved to carry it away with you. The very act of borrowing such a mysterious volume implies that you are in some respects a deep fellow—invests you with a certain literary dignity in the eyes of the lending. Besides, if you know not Sanscrit at the time you borrow, you may before you die. You cannot premise yourself what you shall not learn; or, once having borrowed the book, what you shall not forget.

There are three things that no man but a fool lends—or having lent, is not in the most hopeless state of mental crassitude if he ever hope to get back again. These three things, my son, are—BOOKS, UMBRELLAS, and MONEY! I believe, a certain action of the law assumes a remedy to the borrower; but I know no case in which any man, being sufficiently dastard to gibbet his reputation as plaintiff in such a suit, ever fairly succeeded against the wholesome prejudices of society.

In the first place, books being themselves but a combination of borrowed things, are not to be considered as vesting even their authors with property. The best man who writes a book, borrows his materials from the world about him, and therefore, as the phrase goes, cannot come into court with clean hands. Such is the opinion of some of our wisest law-makers; who, therefore, give to the mechanist of a mouse-trap, a more lasting property in his invention than if he had made an Iliad. And why? The mouse-trap is of wood and iron: trees, though springing from the earth, are property; iron, dug from the bowels of the

earth, is property: you can feel it, hammer it, weigh it: but what is called literary genius is a thing not ponderable, an essence (if, indeed, it be an essence) you can make nothing of, though put into an air-pump. The mast, that falls from beech, to fatten hogs, is property; as the forest-laws will speedily let you know, if you send in an alien pig to feed upon it: but it has been held, by wise, grave men in Parliament, that what falls from human brains to feed human souls, is no property whatever. Hence, private advantage counsels you to borrow all the books you can; whilst public opinion abundantly justifies you in never returning them.

I have now to speak of Umbrellas. Would you, my son, from what you have read of Arab hospitality—would you think of counting out so many penny-pieces, and laying them in the hand of your Arab host, in return for the dates and camel's milk that, when fainting, dying, with thirst, hunger, and fatigue, he hastened to bestow upon you? Would you, I say, chink the copper coin in the man's ear, in return for this kindly office, which the son of the desert thinks an "instrumental part of his religion?" If, with an ignorance of the proper usages of society, you would insult that high-souled Arab by any tender of money, then my son—but no! I think you incapable of the sordidness of such an act,—then would you return a Borrowed Umbrella?

Consider it. What is an umbrella but a tent that a man carries about with him—in China, to guard him from the sun,—in England, to shelter him from the rain? Well, to return such a portable tent to the hospitable soul who lent it,—what is it but to offer the Arab payment for shelter? What is it but to chaffer with magnanimity, to reduce its greatness to a mercenary lodging-house-keeper? Umbrellas may be "hedged about" by cobweb statutes; I will not swear it is not so; there may exist laws that make such things property; but sure I am that the hissing contempt, the loud-mouthed indignation of all civilised society, would sibilate and roar at the bloodless poltroon, who should engage law on his side to obtain for him the restitution of a—lent umbrella!

We now come to—Money. I have had, in my time, so little of it, that I am not very well informed on monetary history. I think, however, that the first Roman coin was impressed with a sheep. A touching and significant symbol, crying aloud to all men,—"Children, *fleece* one another." My son, it is true that the sheep has vanished from all coin: nevertheless, it is good to respect ancient symbols: therefore, whatever the gold or silver may bear—whatever the potentate, whatever the arms upon the

obverse—see with your imaginative eye nothing but the sheep; listen with your fancy's ear to nought but—"fleece"—"fleece!"

I am aware, that a prejudice exists amongst the half-educated, that borrowed money is as money obtained by nothing; that, in fact, it is not your own; but is only trusted in your hands for such and such a time. My son beware of this prejudice; for it is the fruit of the vilest ignorance. On the contrary, look upon all borrowed money, as money dearly, richly earned by your ingenuity in obtaining it. Put it to your account as the wages of your intellect, your address, your reasoning or seductive powers. Let this truth, my son, be engraven upon your very brain-pan. To borrow money is the very highest employment of the human intellect: to pay it back again, is to show yourself a traitor to the genius that has successfully worked within you.

You may, however, wish to know how to put off your creditor—how to dumbfound him, should the idiot be clamorous. One answer will serve for books, umbrellas, and money. As for books, by the way, you may always have left them in a hackney-coach. (This frequent accident of book-borrowers, doubtless, accounts for the literary turn of most hackney-coachmen.) Still, I will supply you with one catholic answer.

Hopkins once lent Simpson, his next-door neighbour, an umbrella. You will judge of the intellect of Hopkins, not so much from the act of lending an umbrella, but from his insane endeavour to get it back again.

It poured in torrents. Hopkins had an urgent call. Hopkins knocked at Simpson's door. "I want my umbrella." Now Simpson also had a call in a directly opposite way to Hopkins; and with the borrowed umbrella in his hand, was advancing to the threshold. "I tell you," roared Hopkins, "I want my umbrella."—"Can't have it," said Simpson. "Why, I want to go to the East-end, it rains in torrents; what"—screamed Hopkins—"what am I to do for an umbrella?"

"Do!" answered Simpson, darting from the door—"do as I did; BORROW ONE!"

LETTER XIII.

HOW LEARNING MAY BE OBTAINED—BY SHAVING: AND OTHER MEANS.

You tell me, I have not answered your request. You say, you feel—and I hope you do—the full force of my arguments on the beauty of borrowing: nevertheless, I have not forwarded to you the list of books that, of all others, are the first to be borrowed. You say you wish to become a reader. It is a laudable aspiration.

Readers, my dear son, are of two sorts. There is a reader who carefully goes through a book; and there is a reader who as carefully lets the book go through him. Which do you desire to be?

Whilst it is necessary that you should have the mere cant phrases of literature, I would, as your affectionate father, counsel you against any unseemly pedantry. You may, without sacrificing any of the time due to the serious purposes of life, obtain a sufficient knowledge of books, whereby to pass for a man of very considerable information; and, in this world, a successful seeming is every bit as good as the real thing. Look around upon men; behold the stations they fill, and tell me if it be not so.

You shave once a day. Well, purchase a cheap copy of Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England. You will perceive that in his Preface, Sir William speaks of the necessity of every gentleman knowing something of the statutes he lives under. Now, my dear boy, I would have you learn the laws of your country, as I would have you, ere you entered an orchard to pluck the best fruit growing there, know the whereabout of the man-traps and the wires of the spring-guns. Having such knowledge, you may here pluck a pippin, here gather a plum; and cramming your pockets full of the juiciest produce of the place, return over the wall whence you came without a single scratch, and altogether shot-free. Now, you have only to consider the whole world an orchard guarded by the man-traps and spring-guns of laws; and have only to know *where* the laws are laid, that though you intrude upon them ever so closely, you are never caught or hit by them. Do this, and who is to charge you with having pilfered a single codlin? You have never been caught in the trap, the law has never fired upon you, and you have therefore your action for libel against any man who shall dare so much as to wink at you and whisper "Codlins!"

To return. You shave once a day.* Well, tear off a leaf of Blackstone, and whilst you are stropping your razor, carefully read it. This is so much time saved; and by this daily practice, you will in due season digest the whole of the Commentaries. Sometimes you will go over your beard a second or a third time,—whereupon, strop your razor again and again, and go through two or three pages. I knew a Lord Chancellor who, like Lord Chesterfield's friend, was "such an economist of time," that he went through all the statutes only in this manner. Being happily blessed with a very stubborn beard, he lathered himself at least thrice a morning; on each occasion getting by heart three leaves of legal wisdom. I have known him declare that as a lawyer, he was confident he owed all his prosperity in life to close shaving.

You are to consider that the operation of shaving is singularly auspicious to study. The soul seems retired from the surrounding vanities of the world, and takes refuge in itself. A great novelist has declared that if, when he rose from his desk, he left a pair of lovers in a quandary, had his hero or heroine at a dead lock, wanted a lucky escape, or an ingenious discovery,—he went to bed serenely certain that the whole difficulty would be solved with the shaving soap of the next morning.† Hence, his novels may be considered as much the offspring of the razor as of the goose-quill. I much question whether the lack of imaginative works among the modern Jewish Rabbis may not be attributed to their copiousness of beard; they never shave; hence, in a lofty, dignifying sense, they never think.

Having gone through Blackstone, razor in hand, you may then in like manner address yourself to ancient and modern history.

You will know quite as much of the Medes and Persians, the builders of the Pyramids, Magna Charta, and all such shadowy matters, after a month's good stropping,—as if you had sat with your brow between your thumbs, pondering and dreaming for a twelvemonth. You will have got by heart a pretty catalogue of names; and names, not things, are quite sufficient for a man, if he will but troll them boldly over his tongue, as though he had the most intimate acquaintance with all that belonged to them. "Virtue and learning," says Philip Lord Chesterfield, "like gold, have their intrinsic value; but if they are not polished, they certainly lose a great deal of their lustre: and even polished brass will pass upon more people than rough gold." Lord Chesterfield knew what was due to life and—the peerage.

* Punch confesses that he owes the idea of this process to the Earl of Chesterfield, who in his "Letter CI." to his son, suggests even a more ingenious mode of absorbing the essence of "all the Latin Poets."

† See Lockhart's "Life of Scott."

There is also another way of obtaining the wisdom of books. You have doubtless seen the advertisements of benevolent sages who profess to cure disease by simply smelling certain drugs and simples. Nothing need be swallowed, nothing need be administered. These doctors owe nothing to the natural teaching of the ibis, to whom, if history speak truly, Esculapius was so much indebted. All they require is, that a patient shall have a nose; and that organ granted, they guarantee a cure. In like manner, do many very clever people obtain learning: they smell the volumes—nothing more. They take a good sniff of a book, and history, politics, poetry, polemics, all fly up their nose in particles, like so much hartshorn; nor is such a mode of education, in the words of the Rev. Dr. Busby, to be sneezed at.

If this were not the fact, do you think so many persons would purchase libraries? Do you suppose they buy the books to pore over them? Certainly not. It is sufficient that they have the volumes on the shelves; an aroma of learning arises from them; it is received into the system of the owner, and he is, and cannot help it, learned. If this were not the case, think you so many human asses would lay out so much money on russia-bindings? No: they carefully shelve the books, and catch learning, as they sometimes catch cold, by coming down the staircase.

Having said thus much, it is, I think, unnecessary for me to give you a list of books for your private study. All that is necessary, is to borrow the volumes, and those as handsome as possible, and having once secured the books, the learning in them is, of course, your own. I would, however, advise you to carefully study *The Newgate Calendar*, a work enshrining so many instances of human ingenuity, courage and suffering; a mine of gold from which philosophic novelists have cast pocket-heroes for ladies, and mantel-piece ornaments for boarding-schools. You will find in the literary off-shoots of the records of the gallows, that the human soul is in its composition, very like a ball of India-rubber; the lower it falls, the higher it bounds. Or it may be likened to the Greek fire, that burns the brightest in a common sewer.

I would advise you also to take a peep into the Grecian mythology; there are some pretty names there with which you may sometimes spangle your discourse, not unprofitably. There is also much moral instruction to be gathered from the stories. Let me particularly recommend to you the tale of the abduction of Proserpine by Pluto. Proserpine has been promised a full divorce from the king of hell, if she have tasted nothing in his dominions. Unable to control herself, she has taken a

pomegranate seed, and the divorce does not stand good. I have no doubt (if it could be discovered) that this case has been considered in many nice judgments of the Ecclesiastical Court.

History has been called "philosophy teaching by example." You may, if you will, consult it in this spirit; but the truest philosophy teaching by example that ever came under my notice, was in a little town in France, at a bookseller's shop.

The beautiful national song *Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre*, words and music, lay open in the window; and there stood an old Frenchwoman, holding in her hand a little Gaul of some six years old, whom like a young starling she was at once teaching words and song. What a labour of love she made of her task! How she crowed forth the air, jigging, as it does, with contempt for England, and how the child chirrupped after her!

> "Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre,
> Mironton, mironton, mirontaine,
> Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre,
> Ne sait quand reviendra!"

"There, indeed," said I to myself, gazing on the old woman and her pupil; "there, indeed, is History—there is Philosophy teaching by example!"

LETTER XIV.

THE EVIL OF SENSIBILITY.—STORY OF THE BANKER'S CLERK.

A MAN who would thrive in the world has no such enemy as what is known by the term—sensibility. It is to walk barefooted in a mob: at every other step your toes are crushed by the iron-shod shoon of crowding vagabonds, who grin from ear to ear at the wry faces you make, at the cries that may escape you. "Why didn't you stay at home!" asks one; "Put your toes in your pocket," counsels another; quite unconscious of the deep philosophy enriching his advice. Yes, my son; difficult as it may appear, the only thing for the man to do—that is, the poor man born with sensibility—is to put his toes into his pocket; in plain words, to smother his sensibility in the place where he hopes some day to carry his money.

Many are the martyrs, my son, whose lives will never be penned. Many the victims who, in garrets and in cellars, have vindicated what is called the heroism of human nature, and by

the awful magnanimity of suffering, given assurance of the ethereal temper of the human spirit. How many, even with earthly famine whitening their lips, have smiled in lovely patience, thinking of immortal tables! How many, in the tatters of beggary, reeking in the nostrils of their fellow-man, have apparelled themselves for God! The looks of angels have made bright the darkness of a dungeon; and the odours of seraphic wings sweetened the vapours of a vault.

But no, my son, I must not pursue this theme. Who would think that I could talk thus? I! a mountebank—a mummer—the buffoon for halfpence? Oh, my son, it was shallow philosophy; it was worse; it was a wicked want of charity in Dr. Johnson to exclaim, "Punch has no feelings!" The world, I grant gives me but little credit for such possessions; and, therefore, I am prone to wrap myself up in the pride of mystery, and to affect insensibility, that I may escape the charge of hypocrisy. Who would believe in the tears of Punch? Who, though he saw them trickling down my nose, would believe they came hot and bitter from my heart? A heart! Said I a heart? Who would believe I had such an organ? Albeit I were laid upon the surgeon's table, the crucial incision made in my breast—nay, the heart itself plucked out—who would believe in its ventricles? A heart! A cushion—a thing stuffed with bran, to stick pins in: for so the world has used it. My son, Punch is not the only creature thus libelled, because inwardly unknown. The Poverty of the world is but a pale-faced, melancholy Punch; a creature denied sensibility, that it may be made to bear the harder buffets. Allow to Poverty all the fine moral organisation—the same susceptibility that makes the system of the rich man delicately melodious as a musical snuff box,—and we should give ear to the utterance of human wants as to a flood of holy song; as to the most plaintive, yet most sacred music of the habitable earth. But no; the organisation is disallowed, and therefore such music is impossible. Thus is it with Poverty in the ears of Worldly Pride; and thus to Worldly Ignorance is—Punch!

However, the purpose of these letters is to fit you for a prosperous career in life; and therefore, I charge you, by all your hopes of larder, wine-cellar, banker's account, and carriage—I charge you put down, smother every rising of sensibility. You might as well take a voyage to the North Pole in your shirt, as hope to live comfortably in the world, if endowed with sensibility. Had you been born to a golden pap-spoon, it might have been otherwise; but you, a child of the gutter, the spawn of the highway—you to talk of sensibility—you might as well talk of the family jewels.

Beware of sensibility. If it become morbidly affected, the result is—

But I will narrate to you a history, my son, illustrative of its perils: a true history—true as my hunch. How I came by it, matters not. Suffice it to say, it is as true as the sunbeams.

Stephen Gladstone—for that shall be his name—in his seventeenth year, was placed at a banker's desk. His gentleness, his almost feminine tenderness of manner, made him the favourite of all who knew him. He was endowed with a most fatal sensibility. His cheeks would redden at the sudden accost of a stranger; and when his employer, as would often happen, spoke in commendation of his labours, the tears would gush from his eyes, and he would tremble from head to foot, like a detected culprit. For three years Stephen remained in the employ of Messrs ———; and every year, such was his assiduity, such his exemplary conduct, his salary was increased. Already the oldest clerks began to predict that "Stephen Gladstone would soon be a junior partner."

When Stephen had attained his twentieth year, a sudden alteration was visible in his features—his manner. Day by day, he became haggard—careworn. His face was pale and joyless; and his eyes, ordinarily dull and dimmed, would suddenly flash with lustrous brightness. The slightest sound would make him start as at a thunder-crash. His employers speedily noticed the change; and again and again desired Stephen to forego his duties for a month or two, to have change of air and scene; but every such desire seemed to inflict inexpressible torture upon the clerk. He would declare he was very well; if he looked ill, he knew not why he should do so, for he was in excellent health; never—never better. And still day by day he seemed to waste and wither; and day by day the weight upon his spirits grew the heavier.

At length, Stephen's employers resolved to address themselves to a physician; who, having heard their story, managed to obtain what seemed an accidental meeting with the clerk.

"Why, Mr. Gladstone, you are not well. Come, come! I see what this is."

"Indeed, sir, you mistake: I am well—quite well. Surely sir, I should know best," said Stephen, a little irritated.

"Never tell me," said the physician, whose cordial tone and benevolent manner would have gained the confidence of a misanthrope; I see your case plainly; it's love—nothing but love."

Stephen looked a look of misery in the physician's face, suppressed a groan, and broke from him.

A week elapsed, and Stephen suddenly appeared before the

doctor. His face was distorted with anguish; he reeled, and fell into a chair; and sat gasping with the brain's agony. Instantly the physician was at his side—soothing, comforting him.

"I can endure it no longer: you shall know all, doctor,—all, though the hangman be at the door. Listen! you know not, for these six months, what scorpions have been stinging me. To-day again—this very day—my employers raised my income: they reward me—*me!* Doctor, look at that hand! It is a thief's—I tell you it is a thief's! But I said you should know all. My masters—kind souls! have praised me for my zeal—have desired me to seek recreation—to absent myself from the house! Oh, God! if late and early I was at the desk, it was that my books might escape detection! And they call this zeal, and they reward me for it—me, who have robbed, have pillaged them!"

Long and kind was the speech of the physician, who at length charged himself to break the business to the masters of the wretched youth, and with heavy heart departed on his mission. His tale was soon told.

"Ha! ha! ha! Impossible," cried the bankers. "Gladstone embezzle money! why, he couldn't take a farthing—not a farthing: all his books have been regularly balanced." It was indeed so. His morbid sensibility, worked upon by the possibility of the act, had, in his fantastic terrors, made him a criminal.

"This is a mistake, quite a mistake:" and the physician sought to soothe the mind of the excited clerk.

"Then I am no thief!" asked Stephen, as if awakened from a horrid trance.

"You've been unwell—nothing more; a little unwell," said the physician.

The discovery of his innocence was, however, too much for the young man's reason: from that moment it was utterly shattered. The banker's clerk—alas! poor human nature!—died a maniac.

LETTER XV.

WEALTH AND ITS USES. STORY OF THE SLIPPERS. "JUST ENOUGH."

One of the best and most satisfactory uses of wealth, my dear boy, is to dazzle with our riches the eyes of our neighbours. Your dear mother once hit this point to a nicety. We had long expected the payment of a small legacy bequeathed to her by a distant relation, whose exact degree of kindred I cared not much to inquire into. It was enough for us that your dear mother's name was down in the will; and that the executors promised some day to faithfully perform the injunctions of the dear deceased. "And when we get this money," said your mother to me in a moment of connubial confidence, "I tell you what we'll do with it—I tell you, my love, what we'll do with it" As I knew she would proceed no further until I begged to know her intentions, I at once put the question. "What, my dearest, what will you do with it?" "Why, my love," answered your parent, her eyes sparkling with pleasure, "we'll take the plate out of pawn, and give a party." Yes; the great gratification to be gathered from the legacy was, that we might flash our four tea-spoons and pair of tongs in the eyes of people for whom we had not the slightest esteem; and to one of whom your mother had, I know, on three occasions captiously refused the loan of her bellows.

You will find, as you know more of the world, that your mother's tea-spoons and tongs are, albeit the humble, yet the true representatives of whole buffets of plate. You will possibly find yourself invited to feast with a man who cares not a tittle whether you have a dinner or not; his only object is to show you your envious face in his golden salvers, to make your mouth water with his Dutch fruit pieces; in a word, not to fill your belly with his turtle and venison, but to abase your mind with a prostrating sense of his wealth. He takes possession of your admiration, as a feudal chief receives the homage of his vassal. And this you are to consider the true use—the real dignity of wealth.

There are some enthusiasts—that is, the generous mob of philanthropists with empty pockets—who vow that wealth is only given to the rich in trust for the poor. Whilst you remain a pauper, remain of this religion—when you obtain money, read your recantation before Midas.

Philosophers have held that the *aurum potabile*, if taken into the human system, tends to refine mortal clay of its inherent grossness, and by degrees to assimilate the flesh of earthly man to the flesh of the gods. Whether gold be swallowed, or a sufficient quantity of it be merely carried in the pocket, the grateful result is precisely the same. Consider hundreds of the heavy purse-bearers of the world, and tell me if it be otherwise with them. They have the lineaments of men; they are bipeds like the poorest beggar: but their moral and physical systems are so coloured, so permeated with the precious metal, that they are creatures quite apart from the ordinary race of mortals. Do their daily acts betray their affinity with them? Are they not as far above the pauper who quenches his thirst at the brook, as the pauper above the frog he disturbs there?

I think I have heard you say, you love the face of Nature? The open sky—the fields, the trees, the shining river, all are glorious to you! My dear boy, whatever may be your present delight in contemplating these objects, as yet you know nothing of their value. Look upon them with the eye of a proprietor, and what a bloom will come upon the picture! Every bit of turf will be an emerald to you; every grasshopper will chirrup—a very angel to your self-complacency; every tree, moved by the wind, will bow to you as you pass by it; the very fish in the river will

> "Show to the sun their wav'd coats dropp'd with gold,"

reflecting there *your* wealth, and not *their* beauty. Nay, that portion of the sky which rains and shines its blessings upon your land, you will behold as yours; yea, human pride, strong in its faith of property, will read upon the face of heaven itself—"MEUM!" Every sunbeam will be to you as tangible as if it were an ingot. How delicious and how entrancing must have been the feelings of Adam when he awoke in Eden, to find himself—a landed proprietor!

If you can walk the fields and look upon the sky with these ennobling emotions, then, my son, you will know the real merits—the true uses of wealth. You will then own that it is only the man of money who can worship Nature as she ought to be worshipped; inasmuch as it is only he who can truly estimate her thousand beauties; who can feel his heart rise and glow as he surveys her charms; and, putting his hands in his pockets, can love her with a lover's tenderness.

This man, rejoicing on his own land, meets something in shape like himself plodding the sod. This two-legged animal envies the squirrel in the wood—the hare he has startled from its form·

he has nothing; his very hands are useless to him: he is denied a spade to delve with, a plough to guide. Poor wretch! he is incrusted with ignorance; covered like a tortoise. What eyes, what thoughts has he for the loveliness of Nature? Let the gracious gentleman who owns the soil and the pauper encumbering it, sit with him upon two hillocks and discourse on the loveliness of life.

Well, they have talked there three hours; for see, the sun is blazing in the west. What have you heard from the man of wealth? Has he not spoken of Nature as a benignant goddess—has he not painted life with the bloom of Paradise still upon it? His whole speech has been a thanksgiving! What have you heard from the pauper!—evidence of grossest ignorance.

> "A primrose by a river's brim,
> A yellow primrose is to him—
> And it is nothing more."

He looks upon the meads, pranked with a thousand flowers, with a heavy, leaden look; they are, he says, to him a blank—a nothing.—And for life, he feels it most when it is gnawing at his bowels.

Will you, after this, my son, say that one of the highest uses of wealth is not to quicken our apprehension to the thousand beauties showered about us? Hence, my child, the inevitable intelligence and superiority of the rich—hence, the gloom and crassitude of the poor. If you love nature, you must obtain wealth for the true—the lawful enjoyment of her. You must wed her with a golden ring.

Having obtained wealth, you are only to consider your own gratification in its outlay. There are foolish people who stint their appetites of many pleasant fillips, that when the worm is wriggling in their shrouds their thankful children may be sure of dinners. Leave your children to shift for themselves—Destitution is a fine whetstone to ingenuity.

In the course of my travels, I once entered a church in Amsterdam. I was attracted to a monument by a pair of slippers, cut in marble; and underneath was written, as I was told, in Flemish,—

"Just Enough."

I found upon inquiry that this was the monument of a wise, rich man, who resolved to make his living appetites the tomb of his wealth; and so nicely adjusted his outlay, that when he died nought was left of his magnificent fortune but his pair of old slippers. "It is just enough," he said, and expired.

There are rich men who live and die in the spirit of the Flemish spendthrift: for to them, this world—and this world only is—"JUST ENOUGH."

LETTER XVI.

HOW TO CHOOSE A FRIEND: THE PURPOSES OF FRIENDSHIP. A STORY OF "FRIENDS."

MY DEAR BOY,—Choose your friend as you would choose an orange; for his golden outside and the promise of yielding much, when well squeezed.

Lord Chesterfield has beautifully and truly remarked: "whatever is worth *doing* at all, is worth *doing well*." This axiom applies admirably to the treatment of a friend.

There is no surer evidence of a contented meanness of spirit in a young man, than a disposition to club a friendship with merely his equals in life: whilst, on the other hand, the ardent, speculative mind, that, looking abroad for a communion of feeling, selects his Pylades from the rich and powerful, indicates a just knowledge of the whole and sole purposes of human friendship. What is its object? Is it not to succour and assist the man elected for its twin brother? And how are you, poor and powerless, to expect aid and practical consolation from one as helpless as yourself? Can the naked clothe the naked? Can the beggar bestow alms upon the beggar? No; be assured of this truth; it is to defeat the purpose of all friendship, it is to frustrate its most beneficent and humanising end, to ally yourself with any companion, who cannot better your fortunes: to whom you cannot on all occasions resort, either for the interest of his word, or for what must be indisputably acceded to be the purest, the noblest offering of the human soul.—ready money.

For a poor man to boast of a poor man for his friend, is to flourish in the face of the world an empty purse. To such a man a poor friend is a clog, an incumbrance; a reduplication of his own wants; an exaggeration of his own squalor. What should Lazarus do but burden Lazarus? To enter into such a compact is to make friendship a bubble—the echo of a name—an empty sound!

How different your condition with Gloriosus for your friend! The jewel on your finger is a brilliant evidence of the value of friendship. The horse you sometimes ride proves to yourself and

all the world that amity is a substantial matter; the burgundy that at Gloriosus's table beams in your eyes, and circulates in your system, makes your bosom glow with the sweetest feelings; and you lay your hand upon your heart, and feel friendship to be a lovely, a most sufficing thing! Thus, you build an altar to friendship in your very self. You are a breathing, moving, satin-cheeked evidence that friendship is not, what cynics and misanthropes call it, a thing of air—the dream of fools.

Can you do this if you hang upon the skirts of your fellow-poor? No, my son. Therefore, if you have a nature capable of friendship,—if you would prove to the world the surpassing beauties of the feeling which poets have sung, and sages melodiously discoursed of,—hang on the rich, select the man of wealth, and him only for your friend; dwell and glitter in his bosom like his diamond shirt-stud.

Possibly there may be ill-mannered people who for this will call you a toad-eater. Let them: I will in few words, and from truthful history, teach you how to answer them.

The ill natured antiquaries of the Netherlands, with bile against the politest nation upon earth—of course, I mean the French—have declared that what are now quartered as the lilies of France, were originally toads. The Abbé Dubos gives a reasonable excuse for this; an excuse that ought to disarm malignity of its sneer: the French could not help it. The Germanic nations—the French then being a part of them—having engaged all the courageous and terrible birds and beasts, such as eagles, lions, griffins, dragons, and the like, left nothing whatever for the poor Franks; who were therefore compelled to go to the puddles for their bearings, and so contented themselves with a toad. This toad, in process of time, became metamorphosed into a bee, for on the 27th of May, 1655, the Curé of St. Brie, at Tournay, wishing to enlarge his wine-cellar, the workmen he had employed upon that benevolent object, came plump upon the coffin of King Childeric I. It was then discovered that upon his Majesty's royal robe were sewed innumerable golden bees. These were subsequently removed to the royal cabinet of France. Whether, however, they took flight at the revolution, I know not. "I do not doubt," says the Abbé Dubos, "that our *bees*, by the ignorance of painters and sculptors, have become *lilies*." Lilies, that, according to Malherbe, were once especially fragrant in the nostrils of John Bull.

"A leur odeur l'Anglais se relâchant,
Notre amitié va recherchant.
Et l'Espagnol, prodige merveilleux,
Cesse d'être orgueilleux."

You may ask me, my son, what has this antiquarian rigmarole about the toads, the bees, and the lilies of France, to do with the lesson I would propound on the beauty of friendship? My son, be instructed.

Let the envious call you toad-eater; make you of that toad a golden bee, still gathering honey from your friend, and turning it to your private advantage. And then, if detraction accuse you of hoarding from the treasures of your Pylades, declare your friendship to have no bee-like propensity whatever, but that it grows in your heart, pure and odorous as—

"The lily, lady of the flowering field."

Thus, when the world throws the toad in your face, take a lesson of the Frenchmen, and declare there was never aught toad-like in the matter; but always, always a lily! Toads you never eat; you only snuff lilies.

Friendship, like love, may, I know, have very odd beginnings. I speak, however, of the friendship of simpletons and penniless enthusiasts. I will narrate to you what I think a very comical incident, illustrative of the mysterious working of friendship.

Lieutenant Montgomery had seen much military service. However, the wars were over, and he had nought to do, but to lounge as best he could through life upon half-pay. He was one day taking his ease at his tavern, when he observed a stranger, evidently a foreigner, gazing intently at him. The lieutenant appeared not to notice the intrusion, but shifted his position. A short time, and the stranger shifted too, and still with unblenched gaze he stared. This was too much for Montgomery, who rose and approached his scrutinising intruder.

"Do you know me, sir?" asked the lieutenant.

"I think I do," answered the foreigner. He was a Frenchman.

"Have we ever met before?" continued Montgomery.

"I will not swear for it; but if we have—and I am almost sure we have," said the stranger, "you have a sabre cut, a deep one, on your right wrist."

"I have," cried Montgomery, turning back his sleeve, and displaying a very broad and ugly scar. "I didn't get this for nothing, for the brave fellow who made me a present of it, I repaid with a gash across the skull."

The Frenchman bent down his head, parted his hair with his hands, and said—"You did: you may look at the receipt."

The next moment they were in each other's arms. They became bosom friends for life.

LETTER XVII.

ON POLITICAL FLATTERY.—THE SKULL GOBLET.

One Gemelli Carreri, a travelled Italian, has preserved the following story. Ponder on it, my son; for, duly considered, 'twill be found to enshrine the noblest worldly wisdom.

You have doubtless heard of Shah-Abas, called the Great? If not, it is no matter. A good story is just as good, and what may seem strange to your unripe reflection, *is just as true*, whether the hero of it ever lived or not. To the philosophic mind, Tom Thumb is as real a thing as Alexander. The wise man is as well taught by a shadow, as by Cæsar at the head of his legions.—However, to get back to Shah-Abas. He was a great man, for he killed a certain king of the Usbecks; and having killed him, did not ingloriously thrust all his carcass into a hole, but preserved the royal skull from worms and darkness, and made it the companion of his carousals and his merry nights. Briefly, the great Shah-Abas had the king's skull set in gold, for a drinking cup. Well had it been for the world, had all kingly skulls been ever as socially employed! The Shah died; and for what we know, had a merry laugh in the shades with the king of the Usbecks, when he met and told him of the late hours his skull still kept on the earth, of the wine that sparkled in it, of the free talk that passed about it, of the jokes that were cracked, of the songs that were chirrupped! The Shah's descendant much treasured the skull; and feeling death to be the great teacher, never slept, without taking copious advice from the king of the Usbecks. It happened that the Usbeck people sent an ambassador to the Shah's descendant, to permit and ratify a treaty of commerce. In those days, commercial principles were in the bud; and therefore, the prejudice of the Usbecks is not to be considered in the strong light of present wisdom. The Usbecks prayed that they might be permitted to export their fleas free of duty into the realm of the Shah; offering as an equivalent, to admit the Shah's blue-bottle flies on the same enlightened footing. The question, as you may conceive, was of great national importance: many of the oldest Usbecks declaring they were a lost folk from the moment they admitted blue-bottles duty free: whilst some of the Shah's people maintained the exclusive privilege of their fleas, as though they were creatures of their own flesh; and loudly clamoured for stringent restrictions, for the sharpest scrutiny. Every Usbeck should be

searched to the skin, to prevent the smuggling of fleas: whilst the Usbecks, firing at this, threatened to throw up a line of observatories on the frontiers to prevent the entry of a single blue-bottle into their kingdom. The Shah's people were not behindhand; for albeit they had all along admitted the Usbecks' sheep, they prayed the Shah that he would henceforth have every beast shaved bare as his hand, fleas having been known—it had been proved upon committee—to be conveyed into the kingdom by means of the wool. The people also called for an army of inspection on the annual flight of the swallows from the Usbecks to the country of the Shah: they, too, had brought fleas into the country, to the manifest injury of the home-breeder.

Matters were at the height, when the Shah gave a handsome banquet to the ambassador of the Usbecks. In the midst of the jollity, the Shah called, in the irony of his heart, for the loving-cup. The cup-bearer approached, and on bended knee presented the skull of the Usbeck king; the ambassador started at the indignity; and felt a nervous contraction of his fingers that suddenly seemed to hunger for the handle of his scimetar. Another second, and he had certainly made a cut at the throat of the Shah, when his eye falling on the goblet-skull of his late revered monarch, he thought he saw the bony cavity, wherein was wont to roll and flash the burning eye of fiery despotism, quickly and most significantly contract as with a wink, and the jaw-bone slightly move, as much as to look and say—"Don't make a noodle of yourself." Happily, too, at the same moment, the Usbeck ambassador felt the fleas of his native country close at his bosom. The ambassador smiled.

"What think you of the goblet?" asked the Shah, with a very ungentlemanly leer.

"I think," said the ambassador, "my monarch was most happy, most honoured, in falling by the hands of a great king: but he is still happier, still more honoured, in having his skull preserved by a greater."

The king was mollified: from that moment the Usbeck fleas hopped without any fiscal restriction into the Shah's dominions, and the blue-bottles of the Shah, without let or hindrance on the part of custom-house mercenaries, sang their household music in the parlours of the Usbecks, and in their hospital larders made provisions for their oviparous little ones.

I trust, my son, you can apply the moral of this veracious story? If the ambassador had given vent to his rising imagination—if on the introduction of the royal skull, he had delivered himself of some red-hot sentence or two,—why, the anti-flea-law bigots had triumphed. Until this day, perhaps, fleas had been

smuggled into the lands of the Shah; and blue-bottles, save as pets for the rich, been unknown in the land of the Usbecks. But the ambassador rightly taking the wink from the royal skull, the lowest subject of the Shah has the luxury of fleas; whilst fly-blown mutton—allowing he can get mutton at all—is within the reach of the meanest Usbeck.

Here, my son, you perceive the beauty, the utility of political flattery! If Fortune, determining to show a great example to men, resolve to make you a cabinet minister, engrave this story on your heart. Never do any political act by straightforward means. Always go round about your purpose. And for this reason; straightforward honesty is the last resource of a fool—mere honesty is the white chicken's feather in the cap of the simpleton.

You were six years old when I took you to see my friend Mr. Polito's elephant, and gave you a halfpenny. With a nascent generosity, which nearly brought tears to my paternal eyes, you flung down the copper coin at the feet of the majestic animal. Remember you not your first wonder, when the elephant took the halfpenny up? What a curve he gave his trunk! How many bendings and turnings he employed ere he placed the halfpenny cake, purchased with Christian-like sagacity of the tradesman near his den, in his capacious mouth! The same action employed by that elephant to pick up a halfpenny, would be applied to the tearing up of the forest plane. My son, the elephant is a practical politician: remember him, and if you get exalted, do nothing great or small unless you do it with a twist.

As the remainder of the sheet is not sufficient for us to discuss a new subject, let me fill up the blank that remains with a few thoughts on the drinking goblet of the Shah. In the matter of kings, you must acknowledge, from what I narrated, that their influence passes not from the earth with their death. Though they are nothing, for good or ill, their skulls—so to speak—remain. What a great lesson does Napoleon offer to those Frenchmen who every morning wash themselves! Understand me.

The French are, above all nations of the earth, a people of practical wisdom—of practical morality. They make the glory of their great men a household thing.

Napoleon is on his death-bed, his eagles flee upon their golden wings to darkness—the trumpet wails in his ear—the last flutter of his heart rises with the muttering drum—and "*tête d'armée!*" is his death-sob. Napoleon is dead. A few minutes—the plaster is poured above the face of imperial clay, and posterity is insured the *vera effigies* of that thunderbolt of a man, just as the bolt was spent.

Now that face, in its dreadful calmness, is multiplied in silver —in bronze—in marble—in richest metal and in purest stone! And now, to teach a daily lesson to the common mind, that awful countenance, with the weight of death upon it, is sold modelled in—soap!

Thus, have we not moral reflections brought to the very fingers' ends of the people? As the mechanic cleanses his palms, and feels his emperor's nose wasting away in his fingers he thinks of Marengo and Austerlitz! With the imperial face the pickpocket makes his hands clean from last night's work thinking the while of the rifled halls and galleries of Italy: the butcher, new from his morning's killing, washes his hands with the countenance of the emperor, the while he muses on Waterloo, and whistles the "Downfall of Paris:" and the philosopher peeps into the tub, and sees the type and memory of the warrior's deeds in bubbles floating upon dirty water.

LETTER XVIII.

ON SOCIAL FLATTERY: STORY OF THE DOG PONTO—PIG AND PRUNE SAUCE.

My dear Son,—Having in my last dwelt upon flattery, as necessary to the success of a politician, I dedicate this letter to a consideration of its utility to every man who would, by the exercise of his wits, make his way in the world. There is a negative flattery, as there is a positive flattery. A knowledge of the one is equally vital with the practice of the other. For instance:—You would conciliate the good graces of a man of wealth or interest? You hang and flutter about him for the bounty of his purse, or the magic of his good word in high places. This man may be a fool: I do not, understand me, fall in with the vulgar cry of paupers, that every man who is born rich is therefore born brainless; but your patron, or the man you would make your patron, may be a fool; and, consequently, is the more frequently tempted, like the climbing ape, to show his natural destitution. I think it is Mr. Addison who says, "He who is injured, and having brought his enemy on his knees, declines to punish him, was born for a conqueror." This is the sentiment, though not perhaps the exact words; for I have long since put aside *The Spectator* with your mother's cracked china. Mark my son, a higher, a severer test of magnanimity He who hears the

abortive jest of a rich fool, yet refuses to turn his folly inside out, is born to finger ready money. This, my son, is flattery by negative. Have what wit you will, but carry it—as courtiers carry their swords in the royal presence—in the scabbard. Suffer your patron to run you, as he thinks, through and through with his wooden dagger of a joke; but never let yourself be tempted to draw. Flattery has its martyrdom, the same as religion—and this is of it. Bear all the wounds inflicted upon you by wealth with a merry face; join in the laugh that's raised against you; but as you value success in life, never show an inch of steel in self-defence. Men who do otherwise may be chronicled for brave, expert wits; but they die beggars.

Come we now to positive flattery. Whatever dirty-shirted philosophers may say to the contrary, flattery is a fine social thing; the beautiful handmaid of life, casting flowers and odoriferous herbs in the paths of men, who, crushing out the sweets, curl up their noses as they snuff the odour, and walk half an inch higher to heaven by what they tread upon.

Your patron is an ass: you hear his braying—you see his ears: *asinus* is written all over him in Nature's boldest round-hand. Well, by delicately dwelling upon the melodious wisdom of his words—by adroitly touching on the intellectual beauty with which fate has endowed him, you make him for the time love wisdom because he thinks it a part of himself—you draw his admiration towards the expression of the intellectual every time he looks in a mirror. You are thus, in an indirect way, serving the cause of wisdom and intellect by juggling a fool into a worshipper. Let it be granted, that you have your reward for this—that, in fact, you undertake the labour for the wages of life: what of it? Is not the task worthy of payment? When men, in the highest places too, are so well paid for fooling common sense, shall there be no fee for him who elevates a nincompoop?

You see an ass browsing upon thistles. On this you fall into raptures at his exquisite taste for roses; the ass, with great complacency, avers that he always had a peculiar relish for them. The ass brays. Whereupon you make a happy allusion to the vibrations of the Æolian harp. The ass declares it is an instrument above all others he is most inclined to. Are not roses and Æolian harps thus honoured, even by the hypocrisy of admiration?

Believe whatever the rich and powerful say; that is, seem to believe it. Albeit they narrate histories wilder than ever Ariosto fabled, averring themselves to have been eye and ear witnesses to what they tell, yet, without a smile upon your face, gulp it all.

Though the stories be long and nauseous as tape-worms, yet swallow them as though they were delicate as macaroni. You recollect Sir Peter Bullhead? He owed all his fortune to a dog. I will tell you the story.

In early life, Sir Peter became footboy to Lord Tamarind; a man who returned from the East Indies with a million of money, and his liver no bigger than the roasted liver of a capon. Lord Tamarind was a liar of the very finest courage. There was no story he would not undertake, and make his own. Had he resolved upon it, he would have been present at the siege of Troy, and more, have shown you the knee-buckles he had, in single combat, won of Nestor.

Lord Tamarind had a favourite story of a dog: which story he would drag in upon all occasions. His Lordship, go where he would, never went without his dog. "Very curious, indeed, very; and talking of that, reminds me of an extraordinary anecdote of a dog. You never heard it, I know; a remarkable case of conscience,—very remarkable;" and then his Lordship proceeded—his hearers meekly resigning themselves to the too familiar tale.

"You must know that in Batavia—it was when I was there—there was a certain Dutch merchant; I mention no names, for I respect his family. Well, this merchant—a shocking thing!—he was a married man: sweet little woman—five or seven children, and all that. Well, this merchant—very dreadful!—kept a mistress, country-house, and all things proper. Well, every evening he used to leave his lawful home to pass an hour or two with the fatal syren. He had a dog, a faithful, humble dog, that always followed him;—that was, moreover, greatly petted by the illegal enchantress. The dog, being particularly fond of his lawful mistress, became, day by day, very melancholy, sad, heavy-eyed and moping.* Then arose suspicions of hydrophobia—talk of poison, double-barrelled gun, and all that. Still the

* The sagacity of Ponto is nothing to the sensibility of the race of King Charles's spaniels, that ever since the martyrdom of Charles the First have betrayed an inconsolable melancholy. The spaniels lost their liveliness when Charles lost his head. We take this assurance from a French author. In the *Journal des Chasseurs, ou Sporting Magazine Français*, for March 1842, will be found the story as related by the Comte de St. P——. The Count in the autumn of 1841, is shooting with a spaniel, when he falls in with an Englishman, who enlarges in this way (as told by the Count) on the merits of spaniels generally:—

"'Ce sont des quêteurs infatigables', me dit-il; 'excellens pour les fourrés, dont ils fouillent les moindres buissons: nous les employons beaucoup en Angleterre, où le prix de tel individu est, suivant sa généalogie, fort élevé. *Il n'y a qu'un seul reproche à leur faire;*' mais, ajoute-il, 'ce défaut s'applique *malheureusement* à l'espèce entière.'

dog followed his master on his evening call. One evening, however —all day long it had been remarked that Ponto was more than usually meditative—the dog paused at the Dalilah's door. 'Ponto, Ponto,' cried the merchant, gaily entering the abode of wickedness, and whistling his dog to follow him—'Ponto, Ponto!'—But the dog stood with his fore-feet on the door-step, and wouldn't budge. 'Ponto, Ponto—sweet Ponto—good Ponto,' cried the wicked woman herself, coming to the door, and offering from her white hand the whitest cake. Ponto was immovable. Then looking at his master, the dog shook his head four or five times, as much as to say, 'Ar'n't you ashamed of yourself?'—sighed very deeply, and dropping his tail, walked solemnly home. The merchant was so affected by the dog's reproof,—(all this happened while I was in Batavia,) that he followed Ponto back to his lawful hearth, and for the rest of his natural life was never known to make an evening call again."

Lord Tamarind had three nephews; he cut every one off with a shilling for having boisterously expressed a doubt of the truth of what had occurred whilst he was in Batavia; but Peter Bullhead, who never failed to ask for the story of the dog—Peter, who had risen from footboy to his Lordship's secretary—inherited all the personal property of the Eastern story-teller. My son, every rich man has some sort of Ponto.

There will be occasions when it may be necessary for you to use considerable address. You must not flatter one at the expense of another; that is, when you have equal hopes of each. A friend of mine, who had lived all his life at court, told me a story that will illustrate what I mean. It happened that the king and queen were in the garden, and some of the courtiers with them. My friend was called by the king. Now it happened that their majesties were so placed that my friend could not go to the king without turning his back—an act at court only little less than high treason—upon the queen. Here was a dilemma! "And how did you get out of the scrape?" I asked my friend. "In this way," he answered, "I *walked sideways*." I have known many men in life get to the golden gate of fortune by walking every inch of the path—sideways.

In your flattery of mankind, you must also discriminate character, lest you throw away a valuable commodity. I have known men so unprincipled, that they have received the incense

—'Et quel est-il?' demandai-je à mon interlocuteur.

—'Ils sont tristes'—reprit *gravement* celui-ci—'depuis la mort du roi Charles!'"

—Upon this the Count observes, as well he may—

"Superstition naïve et touchante!"

of adulation half their lives, and, dying, have left the man who burnt his myrrh and frankincense for them, nothing in reward but a miserable jest in the codicil.

There was my poor friend Sniffton. He hated pig and prune-sauce as he hated a poor relative. Nevertheless, for twenty years did he consent to eat it at his uncle's table; nor could he find words rich enough wherewith to do honour to uncle's pig and prune-sauce. Uncle died. "Thank heaven!" cried Sniffton, "I shall now receive my reward in hard cash for my sacrifice to that damned pig and prune-sauce." The will was read, and thus was Sniffton rewarded:

"And I hereby give and bequeath to my dearly-beloved nephew, Peter Sniffton, in consideration of his peculiar love of my pig and prune-sauce, the whole and sole—recipe whereby he may cook it."

My son, be wary, and avoid such wretches.

LETTER XIX.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DRUNKENNESS: THE GENIUS OF THE CORK.

My dear Boy,—I know few things that tell so fatally against a young man, when entering the world, as a weak stomach. I therefore most earnestly entreat you to fortify it by every means that may present themselves. It is true, that the increasing effeminacy of the world requires of the ingenuous youth a less capacity for the bottle than when I was young; nevertheless, there are occasions, when a man's previous habits and education will be tested by vintner's measure. Can there be anything more disgusting than to see a young man after, say, the third bottle, in a state of maudlin drunkenness? What tricks he perpetrates! How he lets all the world peep through the loop-holes of his soul; and how they who spy, grin at him and chuckle over the exhibition! What, too, is the end of this? I have known an otherwise promising young fellow so forget himself, as to render back in the most ungracious manner the hospitality of the host, who—suppressing his indignation by contempt—has ordered the servants to take off the gentleman's cravat, and lay him upon the mat for recovery. Then what running to and fro for vinegar—what wet towels for the temples—what hints, in desperate cases, of the lancet—until at length the wretched victim rolls from side to side, and gargles his throat with—"Better—

better—m-uch better!" This is not only disgusting,—it is unprofitable.

No, my son; never get drunk—that is, in company,—above the girdle. There is a thermometer of drunkenness which every wise young man who has to elbow his way through the world would do well to consider. A man may be knee-drunk—hip-drunk—shoulder-drunk—nay, chin-drunk; but the wine should be allowed to rise no higher. Then he sits with a fine fluency of speech—his countenance brightened, his wit irradiated by what he has swallowed. And, perhaps, there is no situation in mortal life which so magnificently vindicates the ethereal nature of man, as that which presents him to us triumphing with rosy face above the mists and clouds of wine that roll around him! He is like the peak described by the poet: although vapours obscure him midway—

"Eternal sunshine settles on his head."

There he sits! His toes, it is true, may be of clay—but his head is of lustrous gold. Like the oracles of the ancient day, he speaks wisdom through the clouds that circle him!

My son, by all means labour to arrive at this blessed, this most profitable condition. Then, though you stumble a little on going away, your stumbling will never be seen; for the potency of your head and stomach has survived the observation of your co-drinkers; and thus, though you are helped to your hackney-coach, a wine-skin, a very Silenus up to the shoulders, you have the unclouded head of Socrates to adorn them! How many a worthy gentleman lives and dies with an undeniable character for sobriety, from only having kept his head above the port! A character is to be saved like a life, by merely keeping the chin above the fluid it swims in.

To obtain this power requires, I allow it, great practice: therefore, as a scholar, make your bottle your private companion. Take your liquor, as you would take your book, in profoundest solitude. "Try conclusions" with yourself in your own garret, that you may achieve victories in other men's dining-rooms.

I know that shallow, inexperienced moralists declaim against what they are pleased to call the vice of solitary drinking. Why, there is no such thing. A man can no more drink alone, than he can drink without his shadow.

Pop! There—the cork's drawn. *Gurgle—gurgle—gurgle—good—good—good*—No! it is in vain; there is no type—there are no printed sounds (allow me the *concetto*)—to describe the melody, the cadence of the out-pouring bottle. Well, the bottle

has rendered its virgin soul. You have resolved to sate yourself upon its sweetness. You think yourself alone. Oh, the vanity of ignorance! Why, the cork of what is called a solitary drinker, drawn from the bottle, is an audible charm that calls up a spirit—(angel or devil, according to contending moralists)—to come and sit with the toper. You have, therefore, only to retire with a full bottle to your own garret to be sure of company—and of the most profitable sort too; for your companion carries away no drop of your liquor; but there he sits with a jocund, leering look, on that three-legged stool; and there he tells stories to you—and sings to your rapturous spirit—and now hangs your white-washed walls with Sidonian tapestries—and now fills your gaping pockets with ideal gold!

What a world are you in! How your heart grows and grows! How, with frantic benevolence you rend aside your waistcoat (how you'll hunt for the two dropt buttons in the morning!) to give the creature room for its uttermost expansion! What a figure you resolve to make in the world! What woman—nay, what women—you will marry! Now, you are gathering roses with dallying houris,—and now (with old Ronsard)—

> "Peschant ne scay quelles pierres,
> Au bord de l'Indique mer!"

And whilst you take your flight here and there, how the spirit evoked by the cork hugs himself, and grins at you!

It is by such discipline, my son, that you will be enabled when in society to maintain the look and something of the reasoning powers of a man, when your whole carcass is throbbing with alcohol. You will also find a bottle the handmaid (bottles are, evidently, feminine) of philosophy. After every night's good set in with the genius of the cork, you will be the better able to judge of the true value of all worldly endowments. You will also have a finer, a deeper, a more enlarged comprehension of the weakness of human nature. If, before, you were not sufficiently impressed with the utility of money, you will, shortly after every visit of the genius of the cork, know its increasing beauty. It may be, too, you have not paid sufficient attention to that wondrous machinery—that complex simplicity of the human animal,—that you have not essentially considered your immortal essence to be what it really is—

> "A soul, hung up as 'twere in chains,
> Of nerves, and arteries, and veins!"

This inattention will be remedied—this ignorance informed—by frequent appeals to the bottle. You will, in a short time,

acknowledge the exquisite sensibility of the nerves; for you shall not be able to lift your morning tea-cup without marvelling at the wondrous machinery vibrating before you. And the tongue, too,—that delicate instrument of silver sound,—that shall lie like dry dirt in your mouth, heavy, hot, and voiceless! And from this you will learn and feel that man is clay, and be at once raised and humbled by the knowledge.

Depend upon it, the bottle is the spring, the true source of all human inspiration—the fountain from which all philosophers, all sages, have drunk their best wisdom.

What would have been Newton without a bottle? Do you think he would ever have made his grand discovery unless he had dined first? Sitting in his orchard he saw an apple fall, (what a part have apples played in human history!) and as it fell it *turned and turned*. Do you imagine that Newton would have been so delicately susceptible of the turning of a pippin, if he had not that day drawn a cork? Struck with the nascent idea, he called for another bottle,—and then for another; and when the philosopher had pondered upon the apple, had worked his analogies, and had drunk a third bottle,—he was convinced, that not only had the apple spun as it fell, but that the whole world turned round. If you would prove the centre of gravity—get drunk.

My son, in conclusion, it is well to drink from your own bottle; but it is still better to drink from another man's.

LETTER XX.

ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF GAMING.

My dear Son,—You will, I trust, after these many fond and anxious epistles, look upon all men as divided into two classes—the men who eat men, and the men who are eaten. With this conviction, it will, I hope, be your determination always to obtain a good sufficing bellyful of your fellow creatures; and never to contribute in your own person a single mouthful to the banquet of the anthropophagi.

It is a vulgar mistake, the very crassitude of ignorance, to look upon only those men as man-eaters, who dispatch their victims with a club or tomahawk, and lighting the festive fire make their own man an honourable tomb for their enemies. This mode of eating only distinguishes the savage from his more

refined brother, who disguises and sophisticates his cookery, and by the aid of certain social sauce, makes even himself forgetful of the horror which—to use the cook's phrase—is the *stock* of the feast.

In your boyhood, you were, I know, a most active taker of birds' nests. It was your delight to possess yourself of the eggs, ere the process of incubation had commenced, and having very adroitly sucked out the contents, you would thread the mere shell on a piece of grass, as a trophy of your success and good fortune. My dear boy, it is quite possible—indeed, it is every day accomplished—to treat the substance of men, as you have treated the eggs of larks and sparrows. How many successful egg-suckers could I point out to you, who applying the thousand means with which law and social chicanery supply every man, wise and adroit enough to use them, have so sucked and sucked that they have left nothing but the mere outside—the fragile shells of men! There is my old acquaintance, Barabbas Moses, with his sixty in a hundred. Twenty years ago he lived by putting off pencils, with apocryphal lead in them. How has he grown thus rich—how has he become thus treble-gilt? My son, he has been a most enterprising egg-sucker. How many birds of fine feather has he destroyed in the egg—how many shells of men might he wear about him! It is a poor thing to scalp a man; a coarse, rough, operation: but to feast upon his vitals, nay, to abstract his very marrow from him, to leave no blood-mark there, yet leave him with sufficient vitality to crawl about and look like a man, that, my son, is the master-piece of civilisation, the genius of refined life.

There is, however, a more open, a more generous mode of living upon men; a mode, dignified by fashion, exalted by authority—I mean gaming.

The gamester is, indeed, a privileged person; a creature, who merges all the petty, wearying anxieties of life into one sublime passion. Become a gamester, and you are fortified, nay, exempt from the assaults of divers other feelings that distract and worry less happy men. Gaming is a moral Aaron's rod, and swallows up all meaner passions.

Consider, my son, the vigilance, the self-concentration, the judgment, the quickness of wit, and at times, the dexterity of finger, necessary to a successful gamester; and you will look upon the character with still-increasing veneration. Did you ever know a gamester fall madly in love? Did you ever know him, if a married man, waste his profitable time, his profitable thoughts, upon the woman he has buckled himself to? If he be a father, what is the laughter of his children to the melody of

the dice? What, human hearts to the ace and king of the same suit, when trumps? He is exalted far above the weakening influences that pull down other men, and from his elevation looks with a cold eye of dignity upon the pettiness of human affections. You will hear other men rave about the beauties of nature; of hill and dale, mountain and flood. To the gamester, how small the space that bounds his imagination—but then how rich, how fertile—those half-dozen yards of bright green cloth!

You will hear men talk about the sweets of industry; of the dignity of labour; the more especially those men who never yet set their foot to a spade, or their hand to a plough. The sweets of industry! what are they to the sweets of fortune? And for the dignity of labour, give me, say I, the dignity of luck!

Observe what is called the industrious man. Mark his daily martyrdom. He rises early; breakfasts lightly; hurries off with his bread-and-butter yet undigested to his labour. He toils his eight, ten, nay twelve hours; comes home; eats his crust; and with hardly strength remaining to take off his stockings, slinks wearied to bed. In a brief time—how very brief!—the cock crows, and the industrious man has serious thoughts of shaving: again he is up—again has he bolted his morning meal,—and again is he out to go over the drudgery of how many thousand yesterdays! The year's wound up; and for all this toil, this anxiety, this daily crucifixion of spirit, the industrious man counts one—two—shall we say three hundred golden pieces? For all this tedious misery—three hundred pounds!

My son, turn your eyes to the gamester. He rises when he likes—dallies, at "his own sweet will," with his breakfast. He then lounges away the hours, pleasantly meditating on the coming night. He enters the arena. With what a graceful assurance doth he take the box in his hand. One—two—three; he throws sixes, and pockets five hundred pounds! What a miserable, felon, outcast sneak-up does your industrious man appear after this! What a poor sweating slave! Whilst on the other hand, what an air of power is about the gamester! What a glory—what a magic! He inherits in one minute, by the potent shake of his elbow, all that poor, sordid labour wears its back into a hoop for—its eyes into blindness! Will you, after this, ever dream of becoming that miserable negative—an industrious man? Depend upon it, the true jewels of life—rightly worn—are the four aces. Hope has been vulgarly pictured with an anchor. Let your hope carry a dice-box!

As for luck, you may nearly always ensure that, if you properly educate your perceptions, and your fingers. Cultivate

your thumb-nails, my dear boy; the smallest sacrifice to the personal graces is not lost upon the gamester.

But I will take the worst side of the picture. You are doomed to be unlucky—you are fated always to lose. You have no genius—like the genius of Socrates, that always popped into its master's hand the very trump required—to aid and abet you. The world turns its back on you; and neither by cards nor dice can you fob your brother mortal out of a single guinea. Debts come in like the waves about you: you have no home—no abiding place! This is the moment, my son, for you to exercise the most heroic of virtues. There is cord—there is steel—there are silver rivers. If you cannot live, you can die; and dying you will have this consolation: if you have steadily and inexorably vindicated the character of a gamester, your death will inflict no pang upon a single creature left behind you; and you will have the pleasing consolation to reflect that you never did the world a greater service than when you quitted it.

LETTER XXI.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GLORY: THE SWORD AND THE GOSLINGS.

My dear Boy,—I hoped that, long ere this, your hankering passion after what is called glory, had died a natural death; and that you had begun to consider glory at the best but as a dull mountebank—a thing of strut, and frippery, and emptiness. When St. Austin was a little boy, he and his mother went on a day's pleasure with a certain Roman prætor, to pay their respects to the tomb of Cæsar. St. Austin has handed down to us the following lively portrait of the imperial corpse. "It looked of a blue mould; the bone of the nose laid bare; the flesh of the nether lip quite fallen off; his mouth full of worms; and in his eye-pit a hungry toad, feasting upon the remnant portion of flesh and moisture; and so," moralises the saint, "he dwelt in his house of darkness." He did no such thing; he had vacated his dwelling. Death had written on the corpse "This house to let," and the worms and the toad became the tenants. Well, and what had they to do with Cæsar? What had the "blue mouldy flesh" and the "nose laid bare" to do with Cæsar dead, more than the paring of Cæsar's nails with Cæsar living? Is the evil fame that may be flung upon a house, to attach to a previous occupant? Our maiden queen Elizabeth made sundry

progresses; honoured sundry mansions with her night-cap. What, if in lapse of time, one of those houses should have so fallen in reputation, that its after iniquity has been published by candle and paper lanthorn? Does the evil fame of the house taint or soil the ermine fame of our spotless Elizabeth?

One Jeremy Taylor, who can occasionally twine death's-heads with rose-buds, and strew a coffin with spices, tells us a story of a fair young German gentleman who, though much importuned by many young ladies to sit for his portrait, would never consent. (So far he was right; for if there be a plague upon earth, it is the plague of sitting under a continual struggle to call into your face and keep there your very prettiest and most amiable look, until duly fastened by pigments, upon wainscot or canvas.) The fair young Herr, however, made at last a compromise. He, in the handsomest manner, consented to sit for his portrait after a few days' burial, upon the honourable understanding that the painter, visiting the vault, should limn the corpse just as it appeared; giving no check "a little red," putting no complimentary dimple in the chin, but painting death to the life. The painter was sent upon his mission, and found his sitter with "his face half eaten, and his midriff and backbone full of serpents; and so he stands pictured among his armed ancestors." And a very foolish figure he must cut among such goodly company.

Fear not, my son; I am not about to clap in with shallow moralists who would show the nothingness of glory, by showing that which is, indeed, no part of it; who would put the living Cæsar's nose out of joint by displaying his nose "laid bare" in his coffin; who would prove that it was a vanity of vanities, to paint a fair young German whilst in the flesh, because, when he took his departure from it, and was no longer in any way answerable for any disgrace it might fall into—serpents might gender there. Let us follow out this philosophy.

The Germans, as you know, are a nation of cabbage-eaters. They sophisticate good wholesome worts with vinegar, and Beelzebub alone, who supplies some nations with cooks, knows what beside. This vegetable wickedness they call *sour kraut*. Now, let us imagine the immediate descendant of the fair-haired young German, with his napkin tucked under his chin, about to plunge his fist into the dish. He pauses—looks serious—a tear steals into the corner of his eye: solemnly removing the napkin from his button-hole, he rises, and remembering that the churchyard wherein his ancestor was decently deposited, has been converted into a vegetable garden, he points to the *sour kraut*, and exclaims,—"Behold the vanity of all earthly things;

the particles of our beloved ancestors have undergone a very peculiar arrangement; what *was* our dear friend Karl, is now a —Cabbage!"

Now do we not gather as fine philosophy from the savoy as from the serpent? What is either cabbage or snake to Karl, who, crowned with amaranth, looks down from his starry home upon his would-be-wise descendant, and thinks him a prodigious noodle for pausing in his dinner?

I have, I know, in a former letter, indicated the shallowness of this reasoning, as exposed by my very intimate friend the Hermetic Philosopher; but your last letter, my son, in which you would fain draw a picture of military glory, has tempted me to this iteration. I have pondered upon your picture; now, look at mine.

Many years ago I solaced myself with a brief residence in France. Purchasing a blouse, and donning a cap, I avoided the intrusive honours that might otherwise have been paid to the reputation of Peace, and to the vulgar I—

—"appeared some harmless villager."

On a certain Sunday, I had taken my customary stroll towards the fields. I well recollect it was Sunday, from a sudden jarring of my moral sense—a shock to my feelings. I was overtaken by a cart rattling on at a good pace: it contained half-a-dozen men and women, laughing as if there were no world to come, and looking as joyous and as happy as though the devil himself were a mere abstraction. The worst remains to be told; the cart, in addition to the merry-makers, contained a fiddle and a bass-viol; and it was but too evident, from the affectionate way in which the instruments of sin were hugged by two of the men in the cart, that the unhallowed catgut was to be fingered that very day to the tripping toes and heels of the wicked. I, who had for years been disciplined by the moral regularity of an English Sunday—I, who had spiritually paid reverence even to Sabbath-keeping housemaids, as, with noses flattened against parlour and kitchen panes, they solemnly pondered on sin and death, and the vacant street before them, wondering when the milkman would come, and especially wondering if John Roberts would keep his hour; I, thus naturalised to the proprieties, felt my blood bubble to my cheek as I beheld the fiddle and the viol, and was rushing forward to check the horse, and remonstrate with the wicked holiday-keepers, when, happily, I observed that the driver was furnished with a long and unusually substantial whip. I stopped, said a short prayer for their souls, and struck into the fields.

Sunk, many fathoms deep in my feelings, I was wandering over a field of vetches, when I was startled by the loud and significant utterance of miscellaneous oaths, while a half-quacking, half-whistling noise rose as a sort of under accompaniment to the execration. Lifting up my eyes, I beheld a *garde-champêtre*, in cocked hat, with a drawn-sword. Now, a *garde-champêtre*, my son, is a sort of field-constable, who takes charge of the crows in his district, with the sloe and blackberry-bushes; who sees that the moles are not disturbed in their subterranean operations, and who benevolently assists the hogs out of the mud, should they chance to stick in it; albeit the provision of nature was never more beautifully displayed than in the anatomy of French hogs; for nature, knowing what dreadful miry roads they have to walk upon, has benevolently put them upon stilts. To return to the *garde-champêtre*.

I looked and beheld this field-officer, as I have said, in cocked hat and with drawn sword: and there he was swearing and shouting at what—think you? Why, a drove of goslings! They had—bold birds!—intruded beyond their own proprietary; and there was the *garde-champêtre* with his drawn sword—methinks I see the blade now, gleaming in a July sun!—driving those bits of quacking, whistling, waddling flannel before him.—now with his weapon putting a straggler into the ranks—now urging one—now chiding another—until he got them all into very good marching order—and then with a sweet serenity, he subsided from swearing into singing, and cocking his cocked hat, he struck up—

"En avant, marchons!
Contre leur canon;"

the goslings, with all their might, quacking and whistling in chorus.

I turned round, and pensively leaning my back against a tree, watched the *garde-champêtre* as he marched along; and as he sang and the goslings responded to him—the hapless goslings, guided by the sword to have their throats cut some day for the kitchen,—I said to myself—

"There goes glory!"

From that day, my son, I have never seen a regiment of horse or foot without thinking of the goslings.

LETTER XXII.

ON THE CHOICE AND TREATMENT OF A WIFE.

My dear Son,—It was the remark of a no less distinguished mountebank than Cardinal de Retz—(he and I were very intimate, albeit he never publicly acknowledged the acquaintanceship,)—that it mattered little what were the talents of a man, what was his good fortune in every other respect, if he were unlucky in a wife. By which the Cardinal meant—and if he did not, I do—that a wife to be justly called the better part of a man, must bring with her a sufficient quantity of the precious metal: otherwise, she is only flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; a burden of clay, and not an ornament of gold. Happily, my son, this truth is now so generally acknowledged in good society that, unless you were wilfully callous to its influence, you could not fail to be affected by it. A wife is the husband's chattels—the philosophy of law declares it: indeed, the spouse of your bosom is considered by the law to be goods in a more especial degree than any other property. A man robs you of your wife, and thereby—I put an extreme case—snaps your heart-strings: you lose your better half, and you sue the thief to make good the loss by the payment of so many pieces of metal. The same man, respecting your heart-strings, makes a snatch at your watch-chain, and takes to his heels with the booty. You shout "Stop thief," but the rogue escapes you. Well, the thief would quietly arrange the matter; would, for a fair consideration that should remunerate him for skill and loss of time, render back the abstracted chronometer. Hereupon the law cries—"What are you about? what! compromise a felony? Beware of the penalty!" No: you must put the thief into the dock, if he can be caught; you must punish him for the wrong he has done to society by stealing your repeater. If, on the other hand, he steal your wife, the matter—by the benevolent aid of judge and jury—may be settled between you, and your attorney empowered to give a fair receipt for the damages. Thus, above all other mundane possessions, a wife is property.

It is with this conviction of the true value of female excellence, that you must cast your eyes about you for a wife. You are to reflect upon the huge amount of evil brought upon man by woman, and are therefore in your own person to obtain as great

a degree of reparation as is possible from the daughters of the first offender.

You know the condition of a wife in the savage state. She is the drudge of her despotic lord; who does little but look at himself in a glass, if he have been lucky enough to change skins for one; sings, eats, plays, and meets in council. His wife, with a wooden mattock, or the shoulder-blade of a buffalo, digs the earth and sows the corn; she drives away the birds, and, in due season, gathers the harvest: she pounds corn and salts buffalo's meat; and hews wood and draws water, and prepares the feast; in journeys, she carries the poles of the wigwam, and when a station is pitched upon, it is she who sets the wigwam up, her sovereign lord, the Great Eagle, doing nothing. My dear boy, it is even so in the very best society: that is, if the woman herself do not labour in all these menial offices, she brings the money by which they are done, and the convenience and enjoyment of her husband equally well insured. In whatever rank of life you are doomed to move, you are to choose your wife as the Indian chooses his squaw—for her ability to minister to your ill-ness.

I am sorry to say it, in England women are held in even superstitious veneration; for the most part treated as creatures of superior sensibility of heart and refinement of spirit. (There are, certainly—as I have already indicated—many exceptions to the rule, proved by those unresentful husbands who are lodged, boarded, dressed, and allowed pocket-money by their helpmates.) The absurd deference paid by us to our women is finely rebuked by continental nations, where they have the prettiest words for the *fem-me*, and nothing beyond. I know not a more dignified condition of man than that frequently exhibited at a French *café*; where, at ten in the morning, husbands and fathers are to be seen immersed in *écarté*, the wife—the mere squaw—keeping a fitful eye upon her shop from the recesses of her back-parlour. My son, I know you are fond of billiards. Obtain a wife who by the work of her fingers, or by the produce of acquired gain, enables you to grow grey making cannons,—and at the worst, you will know something of the true dignity of wedlock, its beauty and its excellence.

In your choice of a wife, never forget that age is to be honoured when associated with money. Nothing more reverent than silver hairs with gold in the pockets. Besides, by marrying a woman well-stricken in years, you will be insured against the tortures of jealousy, at least on your own part; and what is more, you will have continually by your side (that is, when you are at home,) a memento of the certain decay of mortality;

which memento, if you rightly consider it, will be the surest inducement for you to enjoy life by every strictly legal means in your power. In all your pleasures, however, respect the laws of your country. Remember, that an act of Parliament is like a rock; it matters not how nearly you approach it, so you do not bump against it.

As for your days of courtship, you are to remember that as woman is the weaker animal, it behoves your magnanimity never to cross her fancy, even in its most ridiculous whimsies. Give her, as horsemen have it, her head as much as she likes, until you turn *from* the church: you may afterwards assert the supremacy of manhood, and revenge the wrongs of Adam.

There are various ways of attaching the sex: but the surest is not to attempt to shine and sparkle, and go off in crackers of jokes before them. Women, somehow, have the same fear of witty men as of fireworks; and thus, how often do pretty lively creatures link themselves to fools! The most certain plan of success (I have it from a woman, and I believe an excellent authority,) is any way to *interest* them. In my own case—(I thought your poor mother had a deal of money, but—well, never mind,)—I at last affected consumption. For a long time your mother refused to have me; when, however, I made her believe that I should not live six weeks, she married me directly. If an heiress refuse you, pretend to take to your bed with typhus fever, and ten to one but she'll insist upon your getting up to go to church with her.

If, after long courtship, you find the lady has not the money you at first imagined, hesitate not a moment, but drop her. It may seem cruel, but depend upon it, 'tis all for her good. As for the nonsense of romantic writers about the wear and tear of the female heart, 'tis a lie in print, and nothing more. Wear and tear! Female hearts never tear: no, my son; they always stretch.

LETTER XXIII.

A FEW LAST WORDS. PUNCH REVIEWS HIS LABOURS. THE LOTTERY OF LIFE.

WELL, my Son, I now approach the end of my labours. Reflecting upon what I have written, I feel that I may in a double sense call myself your father. You are not merely the offspring of my loins; but I trust, I may say, I have begotten your mind.

Yes, I have thrice scratched my head, and feel that I have nothing more to say to you. I have now merely to contemplate —with that delicious self-complacency which plays the divinest music on a man's heart-strings—the beauty and excelling utility of the labour undertaken by my parental love. I have now only to lean back in my easy chair, and twirling my thumbs, see, with dreaming eyes, my beloved child playing a most prosperous part in this eventful world. Let others call it a vale of tears, you, my son, will walk through it with a continual chuckle. Let others groan over the uncertainty of daily bread; you, my son, will have "your teeth white with milk, and your eyes red with wine." Let others look with longing glance at pauper sixpences, you—for you have taken your father's counsel—will know where to lay your hand upon ingots.

Consider, my son, what gratitude you owe to destiny for making you what you are. You are the son of PUNCH. You might have been the child of a Lord Chancellor. From your cradle you inherited a wisdom denied to millions of others. Had you been born to finest cambric and Brussels lace, you had never been taught the beautiful truths of life, which it has been my paternal care to *tattoo* in your adolescent mind. The son of PUNCH! Consider, my child, the many, many million chances you had against your being this, and be grateful for your exceeding felicity.

Mr. William Wordsworth says—

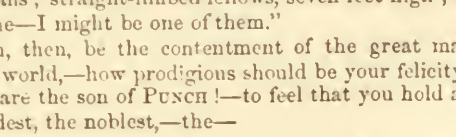
> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar."

Now, for a moment adopting this poetical conceit, imagine the millions of souls about to be despatched to this world, as a sort

ot penal settlement, an uncomfortable half-way house, on the road to immortal fields of asphodel. Have you seen whole clouds of swallows congregating on the sea-shore for their mysterious flight to—*where*, still remains a mystery? This multitudinous fluttering of wings can give you but the poorest idea of the gathering of human souls, bound to earth, and "trailing clouds of glory" from the home they are about to leave. Your finite apprehension cannot grasp the marvel in its entirety; yet it may do something. You see the myriads of winged souls—you hear their fluttering; you see that they are like one another, as swallow is like to swallow; their chirp is in the same key; no soul asserts a dignity over its fellow-voyager; each has the same length of wing, the same hue of feather. These are souls not yet provided with lodgings; they are souls, so to speak, in the abstract. Well, swoop they come down on earth, and like the swallows I have spoken of, take their residence in clay.

Alas and alas! poor souls! Some are doomed to coal-pits, some to arsenic mines, some dig in misery and darkness, some toil and toil, and hunger and hunger; and every day is but the wretched repetition of the past. And yet with all this certain evil grinding and crushing of thousands, how few among them would consent to draw their lot again, if Destiny were to hold forth her human lucky-bag, to give another chance! "No, no," says the Hottentot, with a proud downward look at his girdle of sheep's-gut—"no, no; I don't draw again; for who knows, I might come up a Dutch boor." "No lucky-bag for me," cries the Esquimaux; "I might lose my delicious whale blubber, and turning up an Englishman, be doomed to beef and porter." "Much obliged to you," says the poor idiot with a *goître* at his throat as big as a foot-ball,—"I hear there are such folks as Patagonians; straight-limbed fellows, seven feet high; no lucky-bag for me—I might be one of them."

If such, then, be the contentment of the great mass of the suffering world,—how prodigious should be your felicity to know that you are the son of PUNCH!—to feel that you hold a position, the proudest, the noblest,—the—



If the reader be a father, surely, surely he will sympathise with my feelings.

I had not heard from my son for a long time. I was thinking of him, when I was startled by the knock of the postman. I know not how it was; but the smitten iron sent a chill through my heart, and the goose-quill fell from my fingers.

Our landlady—we were then in lodgings—brought me up a letter. My wife was happily from home; called to assist at a neighbour's labour. I immediately recognised the handwriting of my son; and, with trembling fingers, broke the wafer. I give the contents.

"*Condemned Cell, Newgate.*

"Honoured Parent,—I have to the best of my abilities followed the advice sent to me from time to time in your Letters. You will, therefore, as the Ordinary says, not be surprised to find I write from this place. It is a case of mutton, and I am to be hanged on Monday.

"Your Son,

"Punch, the Younger.

"P.S. You will find that, in spite of my misfortunes, I have the credit of my family still at heart. I shall therefore be hanged as John Jones."

My heroic boy kept his word; and until this very hour, his mother is ignorant of his fate, believing him to be at this moment Ambassador at the Court of ——

THE END.

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